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A
VIEW
OF THE
CAUSES AND PROGRESS
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

✓
BY JOHN MOORE, M. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

Opus opimum casibus, atrox præliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa
etiam pace sævum. TACIT.

L O N D O N:
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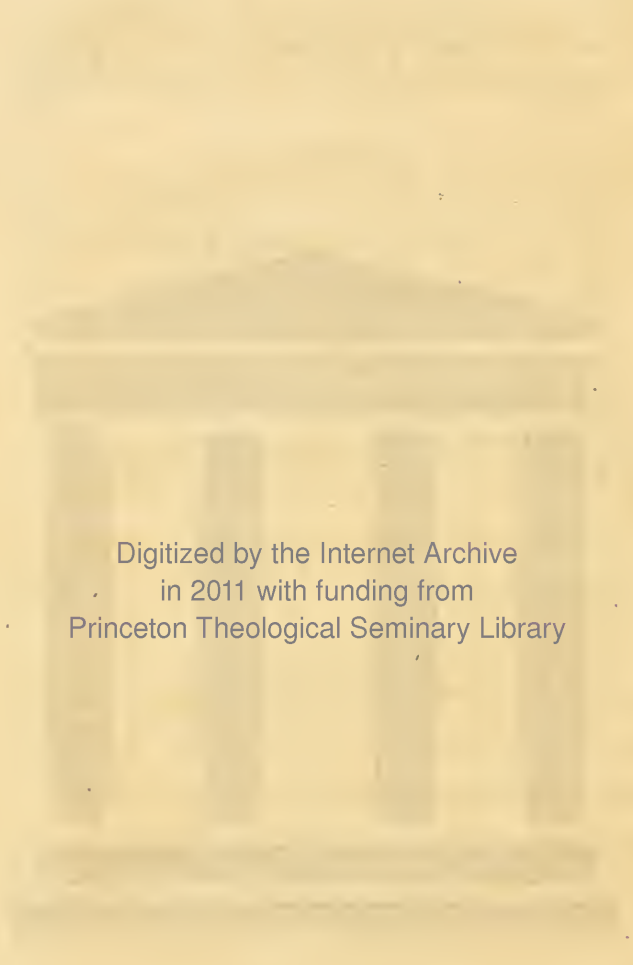
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TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

MY LORD DUKE,

IT is very difficult to write on the subject of the French Revolution without being accused of partiality. I endeavoured to avoid that imputation in my Journal; but a very near connection of yours told me, that, when she was abroad, those who are called *Democrates*, and had read the book, declared that, with other faults, it had an intolerable leaning towards aristocracy. Those, on the other hand, who are denominated *Aristocrates* were of opinion, that its greatest fault was a

strong bias to democracy. In the writer's mind, however, there is no more inclination to either than is to be found in the Constitution of Great Britain, as it was established by the efforts of your Grace's ancestor, in conjunction with those of other patriots, at the Revolution in the year 1688. The present work has been executed in the same disposition, and will be exposed to the same censure.

At a period when prejudices operate with unusual acrimony; when, merely from viewing a particular object in different lights, two sets of men in this country reciprocally accuse each other of designs, of which, I am convinced, neither are capable; when that spirit of hatred which alienated the minds of men from their countrymen, and even relations, on account of a difference of religious opinions, about
the

the middle of the sixteenth century, seems to revive on account of political ones at the end of the eighteenth ; at such a time, the qualities of moderation, of candour, and benevolence, under the direction of a good understanding and scrupulous integrity, derive uncommon lustre from their uncommon rarity. This consideration induced me to address the following work to your Grace.

I remain, my Lord Duke,

Your most obedient and

Obliged humble servant,

J. MOORE.

Clifford-street,

May 6, 1795.

1840

1840

1840

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the above named matter. I have the honor to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith

A
VIEW
OF THE
CAUSES AND PROGRESS
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

The Resources of France—Henry IV.—Lewis XIV.—The Love of our Country—Loyalty—The Regent—Lewis XV.

THE present revolution in France is one of the most awful events of which history affords any record.

The crimes with which it has been accompanied will remain a stain on the national character, which all the perseverance

B and

and intrepidity with which France has repelled external attack cannot efface.

The misery which the revolution has already produced, is of a nature so extensive and so acute, as no rational hope of future prosperity can compensate.

The only way we have to judge of the probability of what is to happen, is by reflecting on what has happened; and the surest means of avoiding evil of any kind is by discovering the causes which lead to it.

To enumerate some of the circumstances which tended to hasten, and are reckoned among the remote causes of the French revolution, may be useful.

Many imagine, that it will be a very long time before the finances of France can recover the extraordinary drains they have of late undergone: it must be remembered, however, that her resources are prodigious, of which nothing can afford
more

more convincing proofs than the rapidity with which, on former occasions, she acquired riches and prosperity, after being exhausted by civil dissensions or foreign wars.

She revived from all the disasters of the bloody civil war of the League, with wonderful quickness, and acquired new dignity and unprecedented prosperity under Henry IV.

A very short time after the civil dissensions and war of the Fronde, her greatness and wealth excited the jealousy, and resisted the force, of several powerful states which combined against her.

The sudden recovery from the disastrous condition to which France was reduced at the two epochs above mentioned, was partly owing to the talents of the two Princes who reigned immediately after them.

The first, being blessed with benevolence

and genius, had at once the inclination to raise his country from the calamitous state in which she was, and the power to execute it—he was in reality a great King.

The second has been called the best actor of a great King that ever lived.

The fine person, dignified deportment, and imposing manners of Lewis XIV. commanded the admiration, and even the awe, of his generals, ministers and courtiers; and towards the end of his reign, when he was at once assailed by domestic and public misfortunes, the attachment of his subjects seemed to make them feel the sorrows of their King as their own, and submit with alacrity to heavier exactions than were ever wrung by tyranny from men.

Mankind are governed by force and by opinion. Lewis made use of both these agents in a supreme degree. Besides the immense army which he kept up, in peace

as well as war, he also kept in action all those springs which have been found friendly to the maintenance of implicit obedience in the subject, and arbitrary power in the monarch. By various means he kept his nobility entirely dependent on his favour. Jealous of allowing the Princes of the Blood occasions of acquiring military fame, he seldom gave them the command of armies, and never for a long time. He commanded in person only when conquest was secure; and without being exposed to hardship or danger, he claimed the merit of having reduced every fortress, which was either bought by his money, or subdued by the skill of his engineers: even in his cabinet at Versailles he affected to direct the operations of his generals in the field, and vainly expected that, *their* victories being imputed to *his* military skill, the greater share of the glory would remain with himself.

He was taught that he had a right to controul the consciences and seize the money of his subjects ; and, as he was at once superstitious and haughty, he revived the spirit of persecution, partly from zeal for the religion which he himself professed, and partly to punish the arrogance of those who dared to entertain opinions different from his.

Compensating the difference in quantity by that of quality, he seems to have thought himself and family, including his illegitimate children, of more value than all his subjects together.

Other Monarchs have rated themselves and subjects in the same manner ; but Lewis XIV. is perhaps the only King who ever brought his subjects to the same way of thinking. He and his glory occupied their thoughts more than their own welfare, or that of their country. Those endearing

3

ideas,

ideas, which are connected with the expression *our country*, roused his jealousy; at least, pains were taken, in his time, to root them out of their native soil, and transplant them around the word *King*: the expression *la Patrie* fell out of use during his reign, and continued so for a long time afterwards:—*le Roi* supplied its place.

That men should reverence the chief Magistrate of a Constitution, where power is limited and prerogative ascertained, is highly rational and becoming; that subjects should admire a great King, and love a benevolent one, is natural and just. The heart owns, and the understanding approves, those sentiments. There is nothing in them, however, to fire the imagination, or greatly to captivate the affections. But the expression *native country* presents itself to the mind, decorated with many ideas from the wardrobe of imagination. To tell men

they have disgraced their country, is the most bitter of all reproaches; to say that they have done it honour, is the most soothing of all praises. The officer on the day of battle is sensible of this; and that he may inspire those under his command with additional courage, and rouse them to the utmost efforts, he reminds them that *they are fighting for their country*. That simple sentence contains all the magic of eloquence. Conjuring up the ideas of protecting our property, our homes, the abodes of our forefathers, the beloved scenes of our earliest pleasures and first affections, it implies defending from outrage our constitution, our religion, all that is valuable and endearing, our friends, parents, wives and children. The love of our country is mentioned with the love of fame by the Roman poet, as the feeling of a noble mind:

“ Vincet amor patriæ, laudumque immensa cupido.”

It

It not only excites to virtuous exertions during life, but a soothing recollection in death:

“ ——— dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos.”

The Romans, fond of fighting as they were, would not have unsheathed a sword for the greatest man their country ever produced, if he had insinuated that they were to fight for *his* glory, and not for their country.

But the French, in Lewis the Fourteenth's time, seem to have thought of nothing but the Monarch. When a battle was lost, their greatest concern was the affliction it would occasion to him—they rejoiced in victory, because it would afford him pleasure, and increase his glory. The great empire of France, *and all which it inherit*, seemed to have been centred in the person of the Grand Monarque—as if there had been a general conviction of the absurd doctrine,

that

that the People were made for the King, and not the King for the People; which has a bad effect on the minds of both, rendering the one more proud, and the other more servile.

This was the case in France during the reign of this arrogant Monarch, whose affected grandeur imposed on the whole nation; and who, whether he was a hero in the eyes of his valet de chambre or not, certainly was admired as a great Monarch, even by the truly great men of his own time. His generals talked of the honour of shedding their blood for his glory. The proudest of his nobility solicited offices, some of them almost menial, near his person; and the great Condé himself dwindled into a mere courtier, to satisfy the vanity of the inflated Monarch.

Considerations of policy and selfishness intermingled, in these instances, with that
foolish wonder-

wonderment with which the nation at that time looked up to their Monarch ; the generals probably thought a little of commands and regiments, the courtiers of places and pensions, and the prince of mitigating that jealousy which, he well knew, Lewis bore him. It is impossible to imagine, that they had any affectionate attachment to his person.

How could a reserved, yet ostentatious tyrant, who continually sacrificed the feelings of all around him to his own caprice and conveniency, excite affectionate attachment ?

A King of such a character as Henry IV. would certainly carry men a great length in the most cordial loyalty ; but let those who wish to embody patriotism, and many of the sentiments which beautify and harmonize society, with whoever inherits the office of King, recollect the characters of
all

all Henry's successors, except the last; let them also reflect, that if Lewis XV. had died before his marriage, then all the loyalty of the French nation, with all the duty and affection which belong to it, and that ardour to shed their blood for their King's glory, which the French of those days were so fond of professing, would have been the lawful inheritance of Philip Egalité.

The impression which the long reign of Lewis XIV. made on the minds of his subjects, continued during the government of the Regent, whose character and conduct were in many respects the reverse. Naturally of a compassionate disposition, and a lover of justice, if wishes could have done it, he would have made the people happy; but indolence and the inordinate pursuit of pleasure prevented him from the exertions necessary for that purpose, or from controlling

controlling the conduct of unfeeling and rapacious ministers.

Endowed with courage and wit, he despised, as dull and superfluous, the formalities which politicians have found useful in government; he scorned that affected dignity and reserve, by which imbecillity so often gains respect, and ignorance is so often concealed; and falling into the opposite extreme, he introduced a laxity of manners, which rejected all the restraints of polished society, wounded decency, and revived that profligacy which had been banished from the court of France since the days of Catharine of Medicis and her son Henry III.

Nothing can be a stronger proof of the submissive spirit which prevailed at this period in France, than that the same system of government continued, in spite of the wanton imprudence of the Regent, the fraudulent scheme by which so many thousand

land individuals were ruined, and the despicable character and nauseous manners of his prime minister, who was at once a disgrace to the priesthood, to the nation, and even to the court.

Instead of wishing for any alteration in their government, the French of those days were proud of the unlimited nature of their monarchy, *with all its crimes broad-blown*; and, after they had despaired of the Regent, they centred their hopes of a redress of grievances in the young Prince, who had now attained the age at which he could assume the government.

No maxim of holy writ seems to have made less impression on mankind than this, *Put not your trust in Princes*. In spite of their numerous disappointments, the highest expectations are always formed by the populace of the heir apparent of the throne. History hardly makes mention of one who died young, who is not said to have possessed

fessed all the virtues of humanity. Of how many Marcelli have we heard, each more blooming than the other, whose wonderful spring of talents promised the most astonishing harvest ! Even the monster Caligula was, when a boy, the favourite of the Roman army ; and if, for the good of mankind, he had died then, the world would probably have been told by some poet or historian, that he was just shewn to the earth *, which being unworthy of him, he was soon carried to heaven. If, however, among those born the immediate heirs of empire, so many are endowed in this extraordinary manner, whose virtues would add splendour to the throne, and diffuse happiness among their subjects, how infinitely is it to be lamented, that *they* should be so early cut off, rather than their survivors !

Many circumstances united in Lewis XV.

to

* Offendent terris hunc tantum fata.

to conciliate the affections and raise the hopes of the nation.

He was the only child of the virtuous Duke of Burgundy (the pupil of Fenelon) and Adelaide of Savoy, whose playful character is painted in such amiable colours by the writers of that age. The Duke fell a sacrifice to the grief he felt for the untimely death of this Princess; and the loss of both filled France, not only with that external mourning which is equally worn for Princes at whose death the public rejoice, as for those they lament, but also with *real* sorrow.

The young King possessed likewise all the charms of comeliness of countenance and symmetry of person: to these the people added, of course, all the best qualities of the head and heart.

Whatever share of the latter he had was soon rendered useless by indolence, and

perverted by the corruptions of a court. He possessed not, like his great-grandfather, that lofty reserve, which keeps men at too great a distance to judge of the real worth of the object they contemplate.—With more weakneses to conceal, he had less the power of concealing them ; and the more the man was seen, the less was the Monarch esteemed.

He appeared at the head of his armies, without endeavouring to acquire any knowledge in the art of war. *They* gained victories, and his General had the glory.

In peace, he became devoted to an artful woman, who governed the state with as unlimited sway, as his General had done the army. Even when she had lost the charms by which his affections had been seduced ; abandoning his person to others, she kept what she most valued in the connection, by maintaining her power until her death.

C

She

She who succeeded the Marchioness of Pompadour, as the acknowledged mistress of Lewis XV. was not so haughty and ambitious as her predecessor.

Intermeddling less with the affairs of state, she was at more pains to amuse and entertain her lover. With all her good humour and gaiety, she found it impossible, however, entirely to ward off the tedium to which a vacant mind is peculiarly exposed.

Although no man was ever more oppressed with mental indolence than Lewis XV. he was fond to excess of bodily exercise, and passed great part of his time in hunting, from which he derived the double advantage of repelling the intrusions of reflection, and obtaining sleep.

The wretched monarch was relieved from the burden of existence, by a disease which he had taken great pains to avoid through the whole of his past life, and which he
caught

caught wantonly in his old age*. He died a memorable proof, that the united advantages of external gracefulness, riches, high birth, quickness of apprehension, and even benevolence, cannot preclude tedium or misery, and secure public esteem to those whose minds are incapable of laudable exertion.

The death of this Prince, who at the beginning of his reign had received the appellation of *Lewis the Well-Beloved*, was heard at Paris with satisfaction rather than sorrow.

It had been the custom, in times of public danger, to make a procession of the shrine of St. Genevieve, the patroness of that city, in the hopes that by the Saint's intercession the threatened calamity might be averted. This ceremony was performed

* Lewis XV. died at the age of sixty-five, of the small pox, which he caught from a young woman, on whom that disease appeared soon after she had been with the King.

during the last illness of Lewis XV. He expired notwithstanding. When his death was announced in a certain company, one observed that the procession of the shrine seemed to have lost its efficacy. “What happier effect could it have produced,” said another, “*Is he not dead?*”

CHAPTER II.

Lewis XVI.—Diffusion of Knowledge—of Riches—The Bourgeoisie of France—The Ancient Noblesse—the Modern—The Courtiers—The Queen—American War—Abolition of Household Troops—German Discipline—Practice and Theory.

IT was not possible for the personal character of the King to be seen; during the greater part of a long reign, in this degrading point of view, without diminishing, in a considerable degree, the national veneration for royalty.

At the accession of Lewis XVI. however, the public opinion seemed to have a tendency to return to its ancient bias. In the candour, affability, and love of justice, which appeared in the young King, the nation found a resemblance with the charac-

ter of its last Henry, whose memory was cherished with filial veneration.

The young Queen united in her person many qualities, which might have been expected to render her popular in any country, but peculiarly so in France—beauty, good humour, gaiety, and a great desire of pleasing; preferring affability to etiquette, and the manners of the nation to which she had come, to those of that which she had left; and forming a bond of union between the two, which promised a termination to long rivalry, and a commencement of mutual support and prosperity.

Those circumstances certainly had a tendency to remove the impressions which the conduct of Lewis XV. might have made, and to revive the languishing loyalty of the nation.

At this time, however, the spirit of philosophical discussion prevailed very much in France. The English writers on the subject

of government were more read and relished than they had ever been before. The works of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Raynal, were universally admired:

Many old prejudices, hurtful to society, though supported by the self-interest of a few, and the ignorance of the multitude, were combated by the authors above mentioned, and others. The writings of Voltaire, distinguished for wit, and a happiness of expression which baffles imitation, contributed more than all the rest to form the taste and bias the opinions of the age. They were more universally read than the works of any other author ; because, to borrow the words of one who knew him well, they possessed “ le précieux avantage d’être
 “ toujours clair et simple, sans jamais être
 “ insipide, et d’être lu avec un égal plaisir,
 “ et par le peuple des lectures et par l’élite
 “ des philosophes*.”

While

* The precious advantage of being always clear

While the edge of his ridicule is turned against persecution and hypocrisy, the most virtuous applaud : but Voltaire was not a believer in Christianity—that was his misfortune ; but it cannot excuse his attempts to turn into ridicule the established religion of his country. One among many peculiarities of this author is, that he treats Christianity with becoming respect in his dramas, and that some of his plays are at once the most moral and religious of his works.

The Encyclopædia, that great monument of universal science, was finished about this period. The avowed object of this work was the promotion of general knowledge, and men distinguished in every branch of science had been employed in it ; but what some of the principal undertakers are supposed to be, without ever being insipid, and of being read with equal pleasure by a person of plain common sense and by a philosopher.

posed

posed to have had chiefly in view, was to promulgate certain free notions on the subjects of government and religion, in which there is no doubt they succeeded, not only in France but in other countries of Europe.

As by these means, and the increasing commerce of the nation, literature and riches became more diffused among the middle and inferior orders of society, many ancient prejudices were weakened and effaced. That haughty superiority, which the meanest of the Noblesse assumed over their fellow-citizens, became more intolerable to the Bourgeoisie than before : what had been submitted to by men when poor and ignorant, was not so easily brooked by the same class when they found themselves richer, and thought themselves wiser, than many of those who were ranked their superiors.

That Russian, Polish, and Bohemian peasants, who are attached to the lands, and
have

have no means of improving either their minds or fortunes, should continue to bear insult and oppression from those whom they look up to as superior beings, is not wonderful; neither is it surprising that the Turks continue slaves, because what knowledge exists among them belongs to their rulers: but if a gradual progression of industry and knowledge takes place in that part of any nation which is most oppressed, while dissipation and effeminacy prevail in that part which is most privileged, a speedy revolution in such a nation may with certainty be predicted.

This alteration had, in a great measure, taken place in France. The better sort of the Bourgeoisie had gained what a great portion of the Noblesse had lost; and that elevation of mind, sense of honour, and spirit of enterprise, which in the days of yore belonged exclusively to the latter, was now extended, in a great degree, to the former.

A claim

A claim of superiority is irksome to many people, even when they are conscious that the claimant excels them in natural qualities and attainments. A considerable degree of deference, however, will be spontaneously paid to these, by the best part of mankind, and will be greatly increased, wherever to such attainments the circumstance of high birth is added ; but a continued assumption of superiority in those who are inferior in every praise-worthy quality except that of birth, is always felt with indignation and treated with contempt, when the open display of that sentiment is not restrained by interested motives.

In ancient times, the power of the state and the whole spirit of the French armies depended on the Noblesse, as gallant a class of men as the world ever produced. The Greek and Roman histories exhibit not brighter examples of generous intrepidity than the annals of France. The Noblesse
therefore

therefore were at once respected by the Sovereign and by the People.

But because a race of men, distinguished for the virtues of the age in which they lived, who were always foremost in the ranks of battle, their sons fighting by their sides, were respected and admired, and had privileges granted to them, does it follow, it was asked, that the same are due to men bred in effeminate luxury, distinguished for their follies and debasing amusements, who, childishly fond of the trappings of a soldier and the pomp of war, shrink from its real dangers, and are equally devoid of the hardihood of ancient times, and of taste for the elegance of modern refinement?

The following is the description which Montesquieu gives of that part of the nobility of France which formed the Court :

“ L’ambition dans l’oisiveté, la bassesse
 “ dans l’orgueil, le desir de s’enrichir sans
 “ travail, l’averfion pour la verité, la flatte-
 6 “ ric,

“ rie, la trahison, la perfidie, l’abandon de
 “ tous ses engagements, le mépris des de-
 “ voirs du citoyen, la crainte de la vertu du
 “ Prince, l’esperance de ses foibleſſes, et, plus
 “ que tout cela, le ridicule perpetuel jetté
 “ ſur la vertu, forment, je crois, le caractère
 “ du plus grand nombre des courtiſans*.”

The general alteration of manners which
 Europe has ſuſtained of late, produced, in
 the opinion of many of their countrymen,
 a moſt ſtriking alteration in the character of
 the Nobleſſe of France. The opportunities
 of diſtinguiſhing themſelves in the field more
 rarely occurred ; and when they did, it was
 generally in diſtant climates, to which thoſe

* Ambition with indolence ; meaneſs with pride ;
 deſire of enriching themſelves without labour ; averſion
 for truth ; flattery, perfidy ; contempt for the duty of a
 citizen ; fear of the virtues of their ſovereign, and hope
 from his foibles ; and, above all, a continual attempt to
 turn virtue into ridicule, form the character of the ma-
 jority of courtiers.

of

of the higher rank seldom like to go, and therefore are not sent. Riches and promotion at home were obtained by court intrigue more than military merit, or merit of any kind ; and the favours of the Crown, being too often distributed by the Princes, by their minions and their mistresses, occasioned much indignation. Many of the Noblesse, who came from the distant provinces, were treated so superciliously by the assiduous and favoured courtiers at Versailles, that they were greatly disgusted with the present system, and as ardently desired a change in it as any roturier in the nation. Many officers of the army, after having long served abroad, when they came to Versailles, found their services forgotten ; and the neglect which they experienced was rendered more poignant by the attention which they saw paid to courtiers, such as Montesquieu describes.

This accounts for the cold support which,

at

at the beginning of the Revolution, the King and the court party received from some of the nobility, and a considerable number of the officers of the army.

At the same time the conduct and deportment of the Queen were different from what long established forms dictated. So far from wishing to impress a continual recollection of the distance between herself and the courtiers, that distance was to her irksome. Her natural impressions as a woman had more influence on her conduct, than the artificial deportment dictated to her as a Queen. She loved to descend from the throne, that she might enjoy the comfort of society. However necessary the pomp of etiquette and the frigidity of reserve may be to high-born dulness and insipid vanity, they were tasteless and fatiguing to a beautiful and lively woman, inspired with the desire, and conscious of the power, of pleasing. Her heart delighted in the confidences of friendship,

ship, and preferred that style of society where there was at least an appearance of equality. She gradually introduced, therefore, a familiarity of intercourse between the King and subject, unknown before at the Court of Versailles.

There are people however in every court who, being conscious that they can derive importance or attention from no source but that of birth, are infinitely observant of the degrees of rank, and anxious that each individual should receive the precise portion of respect to which birth gives him a claim ; but while the various gradations and shades of heraldry were distinctly perceived by many persons of this description, the daughter of Maria Theresa was by birth raised so high above them all, that to her they all seemed on a level. She distinguished people by a different criterion—as they seemed to be more or less accomplished or agreeable ; and by this means mortally of-
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fended many illustrious persons of both sexes, who had no pretensions of that nature.

The King and Queen not only gave frequent private entertainments, but accepted of them from the Princes and other persons of the court ; and each of them had occasionally parties, without the other being invited. The Queen, who was much fonder of such entertainments than her husband, had often private suppers, with dancing, where deep play was allowed, and where the usual topics of Parisian conversation, with all the vivacity and freedom of the Parisian societies, took place.

This did not exist long without malignant interpretation. Those who loved etiquette, and derived what distinction was shewn them from it ; those who were left out of the Queen's parties ; the prudes and duennas of the Court were offended. Had the Queen been better able to support the

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languor of pomp and the slavery of etiquette, the eye of suspicion would have been lulled or kept at a distance, the tongue of slander overawed; and the gloom of formality, removing all idea of pleasure, would have given the Court the appearance of more righteousness, by being less gay.

In a beautiful, sprightly, and unguarded woman *Calumny* found an easy prey; and afterwards being united with *Sedition*, they made a joint attack on the Queen, with a view not only to injure her, but to debase the King, and vilify royalty itself in the eyes of the people.

Reports and insinuations of the vilest nature were circulated by many who did not believe them, and believed by many more on no better grounds than that they were often repeated; and she, who, for the reasons above mentioned, seemed destined to give lasting peace and prosperity to France, was, by malignity in conjunction with sedi-

tion, represented as the cause of public misery, and the determined enemy of the country.

The ostentatious and far more expensive magnificence of Lewis XIV. although perhaps it would have been censured in Lewis XVI. yet could not have raised more indignation, than that species of profusion which the latter, contrary to his own taste, permitted, in compliance with that of those around him.

The magnificent palaces, extensive gardens, and numerous retinue, belonging to the former, could afford, it may be thought, as little enjoyment to a peasant or manufacturer in the provinces of France, as the *petits foupés* at Trianon or the *bals masqués* of St. Cloud ; he might also be assured, that the one as much as the other was at the expence of his labour and the sweat of his brow. Still he had a pride in hearing, that *his* King had finer palaces and gardens than

any King in Europe ; whereas he felt mortified in hearing, that a parcel of worthless courtiers were banqueting at his expence, while he could with difficulty procure brown bread for himself and his family.—What the Court of Versailles may perhaps have gained in enjoyment, by the rejection of etiquette and the introduction of ease and familiarity, it lost in that admiration, which solemnity, ceremony, and distance, excite in the minds of the people. Objects in general appear smaller, in proportion to the distance at which they are placed ; but the reverse is often the case, in contemplating those who are vulgarly called the Great. The degree to which some of them dwindle, when brought nearer and viewed with precision, is wonderful.

Some of the Princes of the blood, who were not judicious in the choice of their companions, *losing their princely privilege with vile participation*, contributed greatly

to lower that sense of awe and respect for royalty, which it is of so much importance to preserve in all countries whose government is monarchical.

The expensive dissipation of the Court, and of the Comte d'Artois in particular, has been greatly exaggerated ; but although that, taken at the highest calculation, could contribute little to the diminution of the public treasure, it contributed more to the public discontent than much deeper sources of expence would have done : a single year, for example, of an unjust and unnecessary war would have cost the French nation much more money, and probably a great deal of blood, and yet the Court might have been allowed to commence it, without exciting any murmurs

The part which France took in support of American independence unquestionably hastened the French revolution. In America many French officers caught republican

sentiments and principles, which at their return spread with the rapidity of a new fashion all over France. The sentiments of loyalty became every day cooler in the breasts of Frenchmen ; they began to value popularity and the huzzas of the mob more than the smiles of the Sovereign ; political clubs were established as in England ; the conduct of Government was canvassed in coffee-houses ; and the Palais Royal, without ceasing to be the rendezvous of profligacy, became also the focus of sedition.

The Cabinet of Versailles expected, no doubt, that, without weakening France, the assistance given to America would greatly impoverish England. The effect has turned out otherwise ; that measure, without much affecting the riches of England, has made France *poor indeed*.

The abolition of the household troops of France may also be reckoned among the remote causes of the revolution. The Crown

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was by that measure deprived at once of a great support and a considerable source of splendour. It is absurd to imagine, that the people can abstract the impression made on their minds by the magnificence which they are accustomed to see accompany their King, from what they owe to his rank and personal qualities: diminish the first, and they will think more flightingly of the two others. This ill-judged reform, therefore, while it lessened the veneration of the subjects for their Sovereign, overspread the provinces with discontented gentlemen, and converted those who at Versailles would have remained submissive servants, into acrimonious censurers at Paris.

It is impossible for any government to support itself long, after a great majority of the governed are of opinion, that it is unjust and oppressive, and wish for an alteration.

This opinion had gained so much among

people of all conditions in France, with respect to *their* government, that it would have been wise in the administration to have acquiesced in the wishes of the people, by forming some moderate and prudent plan of reformation. Some things, for example, which had been thought proper and becoming at the time they were established, but by a change of manners and other circumstances were now considered as ridiculous, oppressive, and odious, might have been abolished gradually, with such efficacy as entirely to preclude, or greatly diminish, the probability of any of those rapid and violent revolutions, which are never effected without bloodshed and injustice.

But this measure of abolishing the household troops, and thereby so considerably lessening the influence and obscuring the lustre of the Crown, seems so violent, that it is difficult to conceive how it could have been adopted by any minister, however fond
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of public freedom, who was at the same time a friend to monarchy in France.

The introduction of the German custom of punishing the soldiers by blows, as it disgusted the men, and led to that defection which afterwards appeared in the troops, has also been thought to have contributed to the revolution. This kind of punishment certainly occasioned great desertion when first introduced, not only among the private soldiers, but also among the serjeants and corporals ; for it was thought debasing to those who were ordered to inflict it, as well as to those on whom it was inflicted. Punishment is peculiarly necessary to keep those who have arms in their hands in due order and obedience ; but when permitted to be arbitrarily inflicted by men often under the influence of passion, it cannot appear so just, nor have so good an effect, as when appointed by a cool and impartial court martial.

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One would naturally imagine that the practice of caning has a tendency to break the spirits of soldiers, and to make them think meanly of their profession; and it can hardly be conceived, that to keep men's minds under the continual impression of fear is a likely means of inspiring them with courage. But we have been told with peculiar emphasis of late, that what seems excellent in theory is absurd in practice; and that many things which are very horrid to the mind to contemplate beforehand, are, notwithstanding, very advantageous when put in practice. From the frequent repetition of this observation, and the manner in which it is applied, one would almost suspect, that the following are meant to be recommended as axioms:

1. We ought to avoid every new measure which, to our feeble and circumscribed understandings, seems likely to produce a good effect.

2. Although

2. Although a measure, from apparent absurdity and the cruelty requisite in the execution, revolts at once the head and the heart, it is not rashly to be rejected on that account, as it may be attended with considerable advantages notwithstanding.

3. With regard to the practice of caning soldiers, as it has been of late entirely banished from the French armies, that circumstance is sufficient of itself to determine a prudent and humane general to adopt it, and order the soldiers to be caned with more zeal than ever, that he may not be accused of imitating the French.

The same train of reasoning goes to prove, that the patriotism which actuated many Frenchmen at the beginning of the revolution, and the efforts they made to reform abuses and obtain a free constitution, having failed of success, ought to serve as a warning to mankind never to make a similar attempt again ; but rather to combine in
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establishing despotic governments of Herculean force to crush the hydra of democracy wherever she tries to rear her savage heads. And as the spirit of freedom in France has been perverted to the most wicked purposes, by a set of the most abominable men that ever the earth produced, therefore the spirit of passive obedience and slavish submission should alone be cherished in every country, and honoured by every government, for the tranquillity of the human race. And, completely to secure the peace and prosperity of the governing power in all nations, which is the chief object of government, it would be expedient to grant it the power, in times of alarm, to oblige all suspected persons to wear fetters, since nobody can deny the wisdom and justice of putting madmen and murderers in chains.

Another circumstance which had considerable influence in hastening, and much more
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in perverting, the revolution in France, was the fixing on Versailles as the place for the States General to meet at. Although it was impossible to foresee all the mischief which has arisen from that measure, it might naturally have occurred, that an Assembly which, it was supposed, was to act with freedom and independence, would have been placed with more propriety at a greater distance from the populous and turbulent city of Paris.

This is so evident, that many have thought it could not escape M. Necker; yet he first advised the King to convoke the Assembly at Paris, and did not propose Versailles, until he found the King and the Ministers positively against that measure; and as it is not easy to assign a good reason for this, it has been imputed to M. Necker's fondness for popular applause, and to his thinking, that the more evident his popularity was, the greater would be his influence
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with the Assembly. He little thought, that the very scheme which he formed for the augmentation of his own influence was, in a short time, to be a principal cause of the annihilation, not only of his influence, but of the influence of reason, justice, and humanity, and of subjugating the National Assembly, and the nation itself, to the most dreadful tyranny that ever oppressed mankind.

It may be thought improper to mention the arbitrary nature of the French government as a cause of the revolution, because it has subsisted many years, and because it subsists still in other countries where no revolution has taken place; but *that* may prove a powerful cause in certain situations, which would have remained inactive in others; in no other nation do the circumstances above enumerated occur in addition to their arbitrary government, nor did they ever before occur in France.

Perhaps

Perhaps all those causes together would not have produced the revolution, without the calling together of the States General; and notwithstanding the greatness of the deficit, it is the opinion of some, that this measure might have been eluded. However that may be, the disorder in the French finances was so great, some time before the year 1789, that the imposition of very considerable additional taxes was thought the only effectual remedy; but as the people thought themselves already overloaded, and were in a state of mutinous discontent, the application of this remedy required prudence and delicacy.

CHAPTER III.

*The Notables—M. de Calonne—The Clergy—
The Archbishop of Toulouse Minister—
Abbé Vermon—A Bed of Justice—Parliament of Paris refuse to register the
King's Edicts—Parliament banished—Duke
of Orleans—Two Counsellors of the Parliament sent to Prison.*

IT had been long the usage for the Parliament of France to register every new imposition. The tax was indeed not considered legal by the people, till the registration had taken place; and it sometimes happened, that, instead of obeying the edict, the Parliament made a remonstrance, pointing out the hardship or impropriety of the tax, and, praying the King to reconsider or withdraw it.

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So much the Kings of France themselves admitted that the Parliament had a right to do; but having made the remonstrance, it was insisted that the parliamentary function was completed, and it remained with the King to give what weight to it he pleased. If he still insisted on the tax, it was then the duty of the Parliament to register without farther resistance, on a letter from the King, called *Lettre de Jussion*, being addressed to them.

The friends of prerogative asserted, that this registration of taxes was a mere matter of form, and that the King's edict gave them all their efficacy, independent of that ceremony; whereas others contended, that no tax could be legally levied till it had received the sanction of Parliament.

The spirit of Whig and Tory had this extent and no more in France, before the American war; but soon after that period

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the spirit of the first became much more ardent and encroaching.

In times of difficulty, when new taxes were absolutely necessary, and yet ministers were afraid to impose them, it had on various occasions been found necessary to summon the States-General (*les Etats Generaux*), and leave it to them to point out the properest method of imposing and levying the necessary taxes.

Les Etats Generaux are an assembly consisting of deputies from the three orders of citizens in France—namely the Nobility, the Clergy, and the *Tiers Etat*; the last implies all the citizens of France who are neither of the nobility nor clergy.

The measure of summoning the States-General was much talked of at the time when M. de Calonne was controller general of the finances; but it required much prudence and circumspection on his part, before

before he decided how to act in the present circumstances.

When moderate reforms only are required in a government with which the people in general are well satisfied, the sooner they are made the better ; because they prevent the progress of discontent, and may be made without risk : but when great abuses have taken place, when the people are highly discontented, and demand important changes, at the very time that there is a necessity to impose new taxes, it is difficult to know how to proceed.

To attempt the imposition of taxes, without first agreeing to the reformation required, may drive the people to resistance. To yield entirely to the requisitions of the people, may be considered by them as a proof of weakness in the government, and encourage them to rise and go beyond reasonable bounds in their demands.

If it is attempted to make reformation

and taxation go hand in hand, by committing both to the consideration of a general assembly of the States, it may be difficult afterwards to take the management of the public affairs out of the hands of such an assembly, delegated by the nation at large ; because a number of men convened for such a purpose naturally create courage, and communicate a spirit of enterprise to each other ; and, in a country where many oppressive privileges and invidious distinctions, or in other words abuses, exist, the intended reformation may very possibly turn out a revolution.

M. de Calonne seems to have been aware of this ; and therefore, however solicitous he might be to avoid the odium of new and heavy impositions, he also wished to elude the calling the States-General, by adopting a less formidable expedient.

It was an established practice in France, for every municipality to elect a number of

its most respectable citizens, who, on extraordinary and important occasions, being joined to the common and usual council, became the *general* assembly of the municipality. This last additional body was called the body of *Notables*. It has likewise been customary for the Kings of France, on certain emergencies, to summon those of their subjects of whose judgment they had a good opinion, and consult with them. These men, while their political function continued, were also called *Notables*. The most essential difference between such an assembly and the assembly of the States-General seems to be, that the latter is entirely chosen by the King; whereas the former is appointed, under particular regulations, by the people.

M. de Calonne determined to summon an assembly of *Notables*, in the expectation that a council summoned in the King's name, and elected by himself, would rea-

dily approve of the plans which he intended to lay before them ; and as part of these plans were of a popular nature, he imagined they would render him popular also. The effect was the reverse ; for people who are prejudiced against any person are more apt to conceive an ill opinion of a good proposal, on account of the proposer, than a good opinion of the proposer on account of the proposition.

The principal tax proposed by him was the Timbre or Stamp Tax, which it was thought would have produced about thirty millions of livres annually.

Many of his other operations would have been chiefly at the expence of the Clergy—which drew upon him the hatred of that body, without procuring him the love of the rest of the nation. His proposed regulations were mostly directed against the ecclesiastical droits seigneuriaux honorifiques ; as their right of appointing judges, the
rights

rights respecting fishing and hunting, and some others equally unconnected with the functions of clergymen. Although these produced but a small revenue, while in the hands of ecclesiastics, who, on account of their not residing on their benefices, could not reap the full advantage of them, yet the droits honorifiques were purchased at a great price by the gentlemen of the country, who were all ambitious of becoming seigneurs. Many people saw no injustice, but great propriety, in divesting the clergy of rights so foreign from their profession. The indifference with which men see the rights of others invaded, often forms a strong contrast with their sensibility when the least attack is made on their own. Many of the laity on this occasion insisted on the impropriety and injustice of the original grant, but laid no stress on the hardship of taking from men what they had possessed for ages. The Clergy on the other hand exclaimed against the impiety of robbing the Church, and

the iniquity of stripping men of rights which they have long enjoyed, but left entirely out of the argument the absurdity of ever granting them such rights. Had the men's situations been reversed, their reasoning would have undergone the same change.

By the alienation of those privileges so useless to the clergy, the government would, as I am assured, have gained an yearly revenue of four or five hundred thousand pounds sterling. The number of clergy at that time in France was prodigious, as the following calculation will shew: Forty-five thousand curés; the same number of vicars; cathedral and collegiate canons, comprehending the grand vicars, fifteen thousand; postulants and expectants, ten thousand; old men retired from the duties of their profession, three thousand; making in all one hundred and eighteen thousand men; to which number may be added, forty thousand monks, and about
 twenty-five

twenty-five thousand nuns: in all one hundred and eighty-three thousand persons, employed exclusively in the duties of religion, and supported by donations of various kinds at the public expence.

It is curious to observe how effects sometimes change into causes, which produce other effects of a nature diametrically opposite to what first produced themselves.

A fervent zeal for religion, no doubt, was the cause of the vast accumulation of wealth belonging to the church in France; and the ample provision made for ecclesiastics of all denominations, was the cause of the vast number that were of that profession: and there can be as little doubt that the great numbers of ecclesiastics, with that profusion of revenue for their use, contributed greatly to the prejudice which took place against the clergy, and which has ended in a coolness and neglect, not only of them but of the religion they teach. Every possible effort was made by the clergy

clergy to turn M. de Calonne from his plan of attack upon them ; but as he persevered, the animosity of that body against him augmented every hour, and at length came to that degree, that none of them went to his house. Among the other extraordinary things, therefore, to be seen in France at this period, one was, the levee of a Minister without a single ecclesiastic attending it.

The Archbishop of Toulouse had long indulged the desire of being Minister. His hopes of success were chiefly founded on the protection shewn to him by the Queen. He had hitherto been disappointed, however, by the small estimation in which the King held his talents and character.

The Abbé de Vermon was a creature of the Archbishop of Toulouse. He had formerly been at Vienna, and, at the recommendation of the Archbishop of Toulouse, had been one of the Queen's instructors before she left that court, and had retained a considerable share of her confidence. It

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was through the Abbé Vermon that the Archbishop had acquired the Queen's favour. The same Abbé had always kept the Archbishop in hopes of succeeding in obtaining the situation of Minister, and now assured him that nothing could so much favour his ambition as the disgrace of M. de Calonne. He represented this as a fortunate moment for the accomplishment of his wishes; for the King, who was known to have a strong desire to appease the irritated minds of the clergy, could find no more conspicuous opportunity than by choosing a distinguished member of that order as successor to their enemy. To this he added, that the great reputation of the Archbishop as a man of talents and a statesman, his weight in the Assembly of the Notables, with the protection of the Queen, would secure to him the situation he wished for in the administration, as soon as M. de Calonne should be dismissed; and therefore all means

should

should be taken to incline the King to that measure, whenever any pretext should offer.

M. de Calonne imprudently furnished one himself soon after; for having perceived that the debates of the Assembly made a great impression on the public mind, and hurt the public credit, he caused a memorial to be published in the King's name, and circulated with much profusion, asserting that it was not true that the majority of the committees of the Assembly of Notables refused the demands of the King; that the necessary previous discussions on those demands, which had taken place and still continued, ought not to be considered as a refusal; and that it was evident, that the Assembly intended almost unanimously to adopt the principal demands of his Majesty.

This assertion, which was not literally exact, and which it was improper to publish, if it had been ever so much to be expected,

pected, offended the majority of the Assembly, and produced a violent clamour against M. de Calonne, which being assisted by the Queen, and by the King's aunts, whose piety made them take part against him as the enemy of the clergy, at last the King determined to dismiss him.

The Archbishop of Toulouse was named Minister; but, to save the odium which would accompany his taking the identical place of the person he had undermined, he had another appointed to the office of Controller of the Finance, who performed the duty under his direction, as all the other Ministers did; the King, for that purpose, having conferred on the Archbishop the title of Principal Minister.

M. de Calonne thus disgraced at Court, abandoned by the Assembly of the Notables, and unpopular in the nation, quitted France full of rage and indignation.

The Assembly itself was soon after dissolved;

solved; but the effects which the meeting of this Assembly had produced were not so easily effaced. During their continuance, the general topics of conversation all over France were very different from what they used to be. The immensity of the deficit, the prodigality of the Court, the distressed state of the kingdom, were the prevailing subjects of discussion in all companies, and were treated with equal warmth and nearly equal volubility by both sexes.

The Abbé de Vermon and others had lamented these increasing evils, and had indicated the administration of the Archbishop as the remedy. The remedy did not prove equal to the disease. The new Minister condemned some of the measures of his predecessor, and so far the public went with him; he proposed others to supply their place, but they proved as unpalatable as the former. Instead of registering the decrees for his taxes, the Parliament of Paris remonstrated

strated against them. The cry for the assembling of the States General became louder and more general ; and people talked with more boldness than ever. If the government, said they, cannot dispense with fresh succours from the people, neither ought it to dispense with asking them from those who, being delegated by the nation, have the sole right to grant them.

The Notables, previous to their dissolution, had recommended a land and a stamp tax, the edicts for which were sent to the Parliament to be enregistered. As it was foreseen that the Parliament would be averse to the first, which was to be an equal impost affecting those of its own members, who had been hitherto exempted as part of the Noblesse, extraordinary measures were thought expedient.

With a view of striking awe and producing submission, by a display of pageantry
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intermingled with military parade, the Minister prevailed on the King to summon a bed of justice.

This measure would have had a better chance of being successful before the sitting of the Notables. The discussions that had taken place during those sittings, had heated the public mind and rendered the people more daring. The Parisians shewed more indignation than terror at the military force which attended the King to the Parliament. Monsieur, the King's elder brother, though of that serious and reserved character which is generally so much disliked in France, was received with applause by the people, because he had declared himself against M. de Calonne. The Count d'Artois, whose disposition and manners had more affinity with the national character, was insulted by them, because he had been considered as his protector.

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It was expected that the Parliament would not have the boldness to disobey the King's orders pronounced by his own lips. To advise his Majesty to risk the experiment, however, was no proof of the Minister's prudence.

The Parliament, driven to the alternative of disobeying the King or provoking the People, chose the former. This circumstance alone proves, that the revolution was already wonderfully advanced. After having for ages exercised the right of sanctioning taxes, and having maintained the doctrine that this right belonged to them exclusively, the Parliament now declared, that they had not the power of registering taxes which were not consented to by the nation; and humbly demanded the speedy assembling of the States-General.

This unexpected declaration disconcerted the Court, and threw the Parisians into transports of joy.

It was imagined that nothing could have rendered the Parliament more popular than this declaration. The Minister proved that this was a mistake ; for he at once brought a great degree of odium on the Court, and raised the popularity of the Parliament still higher than it was before, by prevailing on the King to banish them to Troyes.

Popularity in France is more fluctuating and of shorter duration than in any other country. That of the Parliament of Paris was very short-lived ; it was extinguished by their doing in exile what they had refused in the capital. They were prevailed on to register a tax, and soon after returned to Paris.

A loan was proposed by the Minister, and approved of by several members of the Parliament. This measure was to be decreed in the King's presence. The Duke of Orleans protested against some proceedings on this occasion.

It

It was a new thing in France for a Prince of the blood, not in actual rebellion nor at the head of an army, to oppose the will of the Sovereign. By some this conduct was imputed to conscientious motives, and by others to criminal ambition. Most probably it proceeded from neither. The Duke had been in England, where he acquired a violent taste for the dress and some of the amusements of that country, particularly that of horse-racing, in which he obtained some knowledge, and was thought to have converted it to his advantage at his return to France. He had also been delighted with the opposition occasionally exhibited in the British Parliament to the measures of Government; and his vanity was flattered with the idea of transmitting this practice, with other novelties, to France; thinking that, during the present tide of popular opinion, he might with personal safety lead that fashion.

The Duke of Orleans, however, was banished to one of his estates near Paris ; and two counsellors of the Parliament, who had spoken in support of his protest, were seized, and sent to separate prisons.

After the declaration which the Parliament of Paris had made, there was very small probability that the public would be satisfied without the assembling of the States. The Court, however, was exceedingly averse to this measure, and used every device to evade it ; but it was not likely that what had been attempted in vain under the direction of M. de Calonne, in times of less turbulence, would be accomplished at the present moment by a Minister of less shrewdness and capacity. It was not in the power of the Court to sharpen his wit, or enlarge his capacity ; but what was possible to do was done for him. The Archbishop of Toulouse was declared Principal Minister ; and encouraged by this new dignity, he
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formed a scheme which he hoped would enable the Government to dispense with the Parliament as well as the States-General.

This scheme was to establish a number of courts of justice in France, and at the same time to create a grand court under the title of *Cour pleniére*, all the members of which were to be named by the Crown; and the express purpose of this last court was to enregister the King's edicts.

The edict ordaining this important innovation, with some others, was printed at Versailles; the whole being intended to be kept secret, until it should be laid before the different Parliaments at the same moment in the beginning of May.

There is no question that, if this scheme had been submitted to, it must have had the effect proposed. The credit of defeating it has been generally attributed to M. d'Espremenil, a member of the Parliament of Paris,

who had the address to procure a copy of the intended edicts, which he immediately communicated to that body, among whom they excited great indignation and the spirit of resistance. It seems exceedingly probable, however, that they would have excited the same indignation and as effectual a resistance as soon as they appeared, although the publication had not taken place until the time fixed on by the Minister. I cannot give the same importance, therefore, that some have done, to M. d'Espremenil's discovery ; nor do I think the policy of keeping the project secret, wonderfully profound : for before the copy of the edicts was obtained, it was known that a paper was printing by orders of the Administration at Versailles, instead of being printed at the usual press at Paris ; that sentries were placed in the printing-house, to prevent those employed from conversing with any other persons. Those circumstances, with
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the mysterious conduct of Ministers, could not fail to create a prejudice against the edicts, before the nature of them could be known. Men are usually more afraid of objects in the dark than in the light. Ordonnances, concealed with so much care, created, it is probable, more terror than if they had been published in the usual way without any air of mystery or concealment. Violent harangues were pronounced in the Parliament against those edicts, and stronger insinuations were risked against the conduct of the Minister, than had been heard in that Assembly since the days of the Fronde.

M. d'Espremeni became the peculiar object of ministerial resentment, for having brought the project to light a little sooner than was intended. A lettre de cachet was issued against him; he escaped from the exempt, and took refuge in the Parliament, which immediately decreed

that he was under the safeguard of the King and of the Law; and at the same time sent a deputation of their members to Versailles, with a petition to the King in favour of D'Espremenil, and another member of their body against whom an order of arrest had been also issued. It was decreed at the same time, that the Court should continue their sitting until the deputation, which consisted of the First President and four Counsellors, should return.

They arrived at Versailles at seven in the evening; at midnight they were given to understand, that they could not be received by his Majesty. And the next day a body of troops surrounded the hall of Parliament, and no person was allowed to enter or go out. At eleven in the morning, an officer who commanded the troops entered, and required that M. d'Espremenil should be delivered up to him. The whole Court,

answered one of the members, is composed of *Espremenils*.

The officer not knowing how to proceed in circumstances so new and so delicate, retired, and sent a message for fresh orders. In this state things remained for the space of twelve hours, the Parliament surrounded with troops, while a vast concourse of the inhabitants of Paris viewed the scene with indignation, and might, by the slightest incident, have been provoked to attack the troops, and begun a scene of mutual bloodshed and slaughter.

This was prevented by the prudence of M. d'*Espremenil* and his friend ; who seeing there was a determination in the Minister to seize them, delivered themselves into the hands of the officer ; and one was carried to the state prison in the isle of St. Marguerite ; the other, M. Monfabert, to that of Pierre-Encise.

This open rupture between the Court
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and the Parliament, while it tended to weaken the influence of each, fostered a third power which had not hitherto been properly attended to by either, and has finally proved the destruction of both.

CHAPTER IV.

Discontents—Parliament remonstrates—Cour Pleniere—Bed of Justice at Versailles—Members of the Parliament of Paris protest—Certain Peers address the King—Mild Answer of the King—Other Courts imitate the Example of the Parliament of Paris—The Minister resigns—Instances of Bigotry and Persecution—Reflections.

IN the present disposition of the public, nothing could be more imprudent than giving a spectacle so likely to rouse indignation, as the sight of two Magistrates in their robes carried through the streets by a military force; and that it passed without bloodshed before the eyes of a multitude of exasperated Frenchmen is not the least extraordinary circumstance.

But what seemed to have been prevented,

as if by miracle, on this remarkable occasion, was threatened on many trifling occurrences afterwards. The hatred against the Archbishop was so great, that his name could not be mentioned, nor any thing that could be constrained into an allusion to him uttered, without exciting symptoms of fury against him.

The tragedy of *Athalie* was advertised at the *Comedie Françoise*. It is a religious piece ; and many were surprised to find the house crowded : but they understood the reason when they recollected, that there is a wicked priest, who is also a favourite at court, among the *dramatis personæ*, and when they observed in what manner the following verses which he pronounces were applied by the audience :

Qu'importe qu'au hazard un sang vil soit versé ?
 Est-ce aux Rois à garder cette lente justice ?
 Leur sûreté souvent depend d'un prompt supplice,
 N'allons point les gêner d'un soin embarrassant,
 Dès qu'on leur est suspect, on n'est plus innocent.

To

To this it is answered,

Hé quoi, Mathan? D'un prêtre est-cela le langage?

And the whole house resounded with applause, which was followed by many curses directed against Mathan; and nobody mistook who was meant by Mathan.

The Parliament, encouraged by the spirit which the people displayed not only at Paris but all over the kingdom, so far from being intimidated by the violent steps taken against them by the Court, manifested more courage than ever. They prepared a remonstrance to the King, on the violence of invading the seat of justice with armed men, the tyranny exercised in the seizure of two of their members, and the refusal of receiving their deputation. They proceed to state their apprehensions of a design of overthrowing the *established constitution*, in such terms as convey an idea, that France was possessed of a very free and excellent form of government; for they insinuate
that

that there has existed, ever since the year 1771, a plan to overturn it, and introduce an arbitrary government in its stead ; but that the King's authority would be respected only in proportion to its being regulated by law and equity.

The Parliament were much to be praised for doing all they could to obtain freedom to their country ; but if they required no more than she possessed in the year 1771, their demand was certainly too moderate. If the Parliament imagined, that stoutly asserting that the government had been formerly free would contribute to its being in future what they declared it to have formerly been, the assertion was one of the most excusable, not to say laudable, deviations from truth, that ever was made by a body of men.

The Minister, in the mean time, proceeded in his favourite scheme of establishing the Cour pleniére, which was to be
composed

composed not of lawyers only, but also of persons of higher rank and other professions, and intended in many respects as a substitute for the Parliament, particularly in the office of registering the King's edicts. For the formation of this court a bed of justice was held at Versailles on the 8th of May, to which the Parliament of Paris was summoned, and attended accordingly.

It seemed peculiarly severe to the members, not only to be condemned to ruin, but also to be summoned to lend a helping hand to their own destruction.

This bed of justice was opened by a long speech from the King, in which he accused the Parliament of having deviated from their duty, and interrupted the useful operations of government in many instances, for a year past, and of having encouraged the provincial Parliaments to follow their example. His Majesty added, that although he had been obliged to use some acts of
rigour

rigour to some of their body, he did not intend to destroy his Parliament, but to bring them within the limits of their original institution, which they had greatly overleaped. He finished by giving a general idea of the new court, the nature of which was more particularly explained by M. de Lamoignon, the Keeper of the Seals ; after which the various ordinances were registered, and the King concluded by a second speech, in which he expressed a hope that those members of Parliament whom he had nominated to form part of the Cour pleniere would by their fidelity and obedience merit his favour, and induce him to call others of their body to that Assembly ; adding, that he was fully convinced that the new institution would, upon the whole, contribute to the good and prosperity of the nation at large.

If his Majesty believed that this last observation would have made those to whom it was addressed satisfied with a measure
which

which was evidently hurtful to their own particular interest and importance, he must also have thought them more disinterested and virtuous than mankind in general, or even than that class whose peculiar duty and profession it is to explain law and administer justice, are supposed to be.

The King's speech was heard in silence. That this silence implied disapprobation appeared early the following morning, when all the members of the Parliament, who were to compose the Cour pleniére, drew up a protest against the proceedings of the former day, in which they disclaimed having given any sanction to them; and declared that they all declined any seat in the Cour pleniére.

Along with this protest, a letter from six Peers was delivered to the King, in which they express their sorrow that an attempt should have been made to subvert the fundamental principles of the government;

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that they could take no part in the functions which the new court imposed on the peerage ; and that they were prompted in this by zeal for the true interest of his Majesty.

It was to be expected, that such a protest of the Parliament, supported by such a letter from six Peers, would have made the Court either renounce the whole scheme of the Cour pleniere, or else immediately bring forth those means, which hitherto had been concealed from the public, on which they relied for making it effectual ; the King's advisers must have thought, the means they were to use very powerful, since they had to overcome the resistance of the whole Parliament and part of the Peerage, the disapprobation of the majority of the Clergy, and that marked aversion which had been shewn to the measure from the beginning by the public at large.

A few hours after the Parliament's protest

test and the Peers' letter had been presented to the King, that part of the Parliament which was to be of the Cour pleniere was unexpectedly summoned by his Majesty to re-assemble in the hall from which they had just withdrawn. And when the King appeared in person, all were persuaded that they were about to hear that the obnoxious measure was to be abandoned; or, if they should be disappointed in that expectation, they thought they would be so far gratified at least, as to learn what they had tortured their ingenuity in vain to divine—namely, what the resources were on which the Minister depended for making it good.

But after so much expectation and curiosity had been excited, every body was surprised to hear his Majesty repeat, with little alteration or addition, what he had said the day before, respecting his determination to carry the new ordinances into execution;

immediately after which he dismissed the Assembly.

The most probable conjecture that was made to account for a scene which seemed so devoid of meaning was, that on receiving the protest and letter, something had been resolved on by the Court, which required to be directly announced to the Parliament; and that after the members were summoned, the measure so suddenly adopted had been as suddenly renounced, and the King obliged to meet them before a plausible pretext had been thought of for calling them together.

Whatever may be in this, those Magistrates met again the same evening, and in a new address to the King confirmed their former resolutions, and ordered the same to be printed, and dispersed all over the kingdom. The following paragraph will give an idea of this second declaration :

“ Nous declarons que nous persisterons
jusqu'à

jusqu'à notre dernier soupir dans les arrêtés précédemment pris par ladite cour, et dans les principes y contenus*."

The King sent back to each of the six Peers his letter with the following answer :

" Mon Cousin, pour ne pas vous marquer trop de déplaisir de la lettre que vous m'avez écrite, je vous la renvoie. Je veux bien ne l'attribuer qu'à un premier mouvement, et je vous prie d'y réfléchir sérieusement†."

Whether it was the extreme moderation of this letter, or some other consideration, that produced the effect, is not known ; but three of the Peers withdrew their support of the Parliament's protest immediately after they had received the King's answer.

* We declare that we will persist to our last breath in the protests already taken by the Parliament, and in the principles they contain.

† My Cousin—That I may not shew too much displeasure at the letter you have written to me, I send it back to you. I am willing to impute it to a hasty impulse, and I desire you will reconsider it with attention.

In the mean time orders had been sent to Paris, for clapping the King's seal upon the bureaux containing the papers and archives belonging to the Parliament, and for locking them, and carrying away the keys. The other Parliaments in the kingdom were also suspended from their functions, from holding any meetings, and from issuing any memorials or resolutions on public affairs.

The Court of Chatelet, so far from being intimidated by, or shewing obedience to these measures and orders, after a long sitting, published a declaration containing a protest in the strongest terms against them. This example was followed by other Courts in the provinces. Strong symptoms of discontent were manifested all over the kingdom, which ended in insurrections in Brittany, Dauphiny, Languedoc, and other parts.

An hurricane of unexampled violence, which happened on the 13th of July 1788,

by

by its extensive devastation in various parts of France occasioned much private misery, in addition to the public discontent which before existed.

The Minister, now Archbishop of Sens, being terrified from holding any longer a place which had produced to him so much inward anguish and outward odium, or remaining any longer in a country where the elements as well as the people seemed to declare against him, suddenly resigned, and set out with all possible expedition for Italy.

It is said that he earnestly advised the King to replace M. Necker in his former situation as Minister of the Finance. Whether this was true or not, it is certain that the Archbishop's friends took great pains to spread the report, with a view to render him less obnoxious to the people; and it has even been asserted, that to this report the Minister was indebted for effecting a safe retreat out of France; as the people

were often disposed to stop and insult him—but desisted, upon being assured that it was by his advice that M. Necker was re-appointed.

This fact will appear the more curious when it is recollected, that in the year 1572 a King of France issued an order to massacre all the Protestants in his dominions, and the order was obeyed with alacrity by his Catholic subjects in the capital and in some of the provinces.

In 1593, the most accomplished of all their Princes was obliged to abjure the Protestant religion, to render himself acceptable to the French people.

In 1685 the edict of Nantes in favour of the Protestants of France was revoked, and prodigious numbers of the most industrious inhabitants were driven out of the kingdom by the despicable bigotry of their Grand Monarch and the furious zeal of the people.

Even so lately as the year 1762, the Protestant clergy were executed legally for the exercise of their profession. One of the name of Rochette was taken up for that crime at Montauban, and carried to Toulouse, where he was condemned and executed. Three brothers of the name of Grenier, Protestants, of a noble family in Languedoc, having made some endeavours for the release of the minister Rochette when he was first taken up, were apprehended, conveyed to Toulouse with him, and condemned to lose their heads; which sentence was put in execution.

But the spirit of bigotry and persecution which prevailed in the south of France, particularly at Toulouse, appeared in a still more shocking shape, in the cruelties exercised on the unfortunate Calas family, as they are particularized in the writings of Voltaire, and were proved before the Parliament of Paris.

One example among many, of the great and rapid alterations that have taken place in the public opinion within these few last years, is, that notwithstanding some of the instances above mentioned occurred in the year 1762, yet in the year 1788 a Prime Minister of France, the Archbishop of that very Toulouse, found protection in travelling through France, and was screened from the indignation of the people, through the influence and popularity of a man who was at once a stranger, a republican, and a heretic.

Any material alteration in the opinions and prejudices of a whole nation took much longer time in former ages to be brought about. Since material alterations in the public opinions may, for reasons which are so obvious that they need not be pointed out, be effected with infinitely more rapidity than heretofore, it is of more importance now than ever for all Governments, particularly those
of

of free countries, to be alert in attending to these alterations as they occur, that they may be able in time to preclude the mischiefs which arise from the current of public opinion bearing one way, and the measures of Government another ; for, to maintain tranquillity, one of two things must be done : a Minister must either adapt his measures to the public opinion ; or, which is a much more difficult task, and requires very uncommon talents to accomplish, he must turn round the public opinion in favour of his measures—which task, difficult as it is, has sometimes been performed with infinite ability and address.

No minister of this stamp had appeared for a long time in France. The general sentiments of the nation had been flowing for several years in opposition to the nature of the existing government. Many ancient institutions, established by power, cemented by craft, and venerated by superstition,
were

were now looked on as ridiculous, and complained of as oppressive. A few well-judged concessions and alterations, had they been made in time, might have proved satisfactory, and restored tranquillity. But old grievances remained unredressed, new sources of complaint were daily springing up, and such an accumulation of discontent had been formed as obscured the political hemisphere, and threatened an approaching storm.

The vessel of the state never was in a more shattered condition, never was assailed by more violent storms, and never had been entrusted to a pilot less qualified for steering her through the sand banks and rocks among which she was involved.

The Archbishop of Toulouse, although he might have foreseen all the dangers he had to encounter, before he took such pains to supersede M. de Calonne, seemed not to have discovered them till after he was Minister,

nister, and to have been deprived of all presence of mind as soon as they opened to his view. He adopted measures equally weak and inconsistent. First he assumes an air of courage, and tries to strike terror by the parade of a bed of justice, and by banishing the Parliament. He then recalls the Parliament, and seems disposed to court and conciliate the members ; and immediately afterwards he quarrels with them again, seizes two of their number, and sends them to distant prisons. But on finding that those rigorous measures no way intimidated the people, who still continued to resist, he himself became intimidated, and suddenly quitted the helm. The Archbishop seems in point of courage to have been such a Minister as Ancient Pistol was a soldier—fierce and swaggering to a yielding foe, but ready to fly from a *Barbary hen*, if her feathers turn back in any shew of resistance.

CHAPTER V.

Exhibition in the Street—M. Necker—Political Pamphlets—Opinions respecting the Number of Deputies of the Tiers-Etat—Search for Precedents—Second Assembly of the Notables—French Parliaments—The Notables give their Opinion—The States General are constituted on a different Plan—The Minister's Motives for this.

THE hatred of the Parisians to their late Minister, and their joy at his disgrace, appeared by certain exhibitions in the streets of Paris, which are characteristic of a French mob. Some of these scenes were of a ludicrous nature, and some faintly typify the wanton and atrocious transactions on the same theatre at subsequent periods.

A number of idle people, having dressed the stuffed figure of a man in the robes of an Archbishop, carried it through the streets in procession to the place of execution, where it was to be publicly burnt; and some of the mob perceiving an ecclesiastic among the spectators, laid hold of him, called him Abbé Vermon and Father Confessor to the Archbishop, and having obliged him to mimic the ceremony of confessing a condemned criminal, they threw the effigy of the Minister into the flames. When the populace were preparing to repeat this piece of mummary the next day, the military were ordered to interfere: the consequence was, that several people were killed and more wounded.

Every incident that tended to irritate the minds of the people against the executive power was particularly unfortunate at this time, when the States General were about to be assembled.

A confi-

A considerable number of men convened together, with powers delegated by the nation at large, for the express purpose of reforming abuses, naturally communicate courage and a spirit of enterprise to each other ; and where many grievances are to be redressed, what was intended merely for the purpose of reformation is exceedingly likely to be the cause of a revolution.

The former Ministers had foreseen this, and therefore used every art to preclude, and afterwards to postpone, the convention of the States. The most effectual means would have been a timely reformation of the most oppressive abuses ; but this had been neglected. No measure was adopted for reforming any, until they were forced into this scheme for reforming all.

The scene which had been acted in the streets of Paris, at the execution in effigy of the Archbishop, was imitated in the provinces, where various tumults occurred. Some
blood

blood was shed, and a general insurrection was dreaded: but the replacing M. Necker in the office he had formerly held, put an end to those apprehensions, and gave an almost general satisfaction all over the nation.

M. Necker was a citizen of Geneva, bred a banker; and in that business at Paris he accumulated a very large fortune, sustaining the character of a man of integrity. His fortune enabled him, and his inclination prompted him, to live in a style at once splendid and hospitable; his house was frequented by men of rank and by men of letters. His education, according to the custom of his country, had been more of a literary nature than it is usual in other countries to give to those who are bred to what is called business; he cultivated his taste for letters in the intervals of business ever after; he was thought to have just, extensive, and philosophical ideas on the subjects of commerce and finance; to be an able calculator,

and indefatigable in business; his greatest enemies have not been able to injure his reputation for probity.

At a time when the finances of France were in great disorder, it is not surprising that a man of such a character, and so connected, should be thought of as a proper person to regulate them: yet it has been asserted, that he owed his appointment to the office of Director of the Finance to the recommendation of M. de Pezay, who had great influence with M. de Maurepas the Prime Minister, and whose recommendations are said to have been sometimes very expensive to obtain.

This took place several years previous to the revolution. The public had the highest expectation from the measure; for M. Necker's talents had been praised with an exaggeration which the enthusiasm of the moment alone could have rendered credible.

If any attempted to insinuate that the
office

office was too high and confidential for a foreigner, a banker, and a heretic, those very circumstances were retorted as proofs of the wisdom of placing him in it ; for what else, it was said, but the most superlative abilities could have made a foreigner, a banker, and a heretic, be thought of as Minister of France?

Notwithstanding his situation, however, M. Necker had no immediate communication with the King in the way of his office, it being part of the duty of M. Taboureau, the Controller General of Finance, to communicate on that business with his Majesty : but the superior knowledge of M. Necker, or perhaps the prevailing opinion that he possessed a superior knowledge, was so mortifying to M. Taboureau, that he resigned his office ; which placed M. Necker in the situation he earnestly desired.

Soon after he had been appointed Director General, he suppressed the offices of Inten-

dants des Finances, which were occupied by members of the King's Council. The enemies of M. Necker have asserted, that his only reason for this reform was, that he did not find those gentlemen sufficiently convinced of his superior talents ; for there was nothing saved to the public by this reform, because the value of the places was paid to each of those gentlemen, and the interest of the money was nearly equal to the emoluments of the office.

M. Necker, thus gratified in the desire of communicating directly with the King on the business of his office, still found himself excluded from the Council of State. His religion prevented his taking the oath exacted of all before they could be admitted into that Council. He did not relish this exclusion, and imagined that his credit with the public, and the need which he conceived the Council had for the lights which he could throw on their deliberations, would

would prevail on his Majesty to dispense with the oath in his particular case. He therefore thought proper to address the King by letter, representing the inconveniences which arose from his not being personally at the Council, and requesting that he might be admitted in future.

M. Maurepas had been for some time displeased with M. Necker. He represented the request as arrogant; and to M. Necker's astonishment and mortification, instead of being admitted into the Cabinet Council, he was dismissed from the Administration.

However surprised he and his friends were at a disgrace so unexpected, he did not lose the hope of being soon re-instated in his office; and his friends and admirers, of which he had a great number, never ceased asserting that there was only one man in France capable of re-establishing the finances and tranquillity of that country, and M. Necker was that man.

The conduct of M. Necker's successors did not prove that the first clause of this assertion was false; nor did his own conduct after he was re-instated in his office prove that the last clause was true. If the man in question really exists, unfortunately for France he has not as yet been discovered.

A laboured work on the subject of French finance was the fruit of M. Necker's retreat, and the means which he thought most likely to bring about his recall; which however, although this work threw new light on the state of the revenue, developed his own plan of economy, and was greatly relished by the public, did not take place until the retreat of the Archbishop of Sens, as mentioned above, which was three years after the publication of M. Necker's work.

One of the first acts of M. Necker's administration was, recalling the exiled Magistrates, and re-establishing the Parliaments

ments in the exercise of their functions. He was also determined upon the popular measure of assembling the States-General ; but whether he was decided in his mind as to the mode of their being constituted or not, he seemed at least to have the appearance of deliberating on that point.

The public mind had been for some time kept in continual agitation with political discussions in general, and on this in particular. The presses all over France poured forth political pamphlets without number, in the greater part of which the abuses of Government and the faults of Administration were enumerated with exaggeration. These writings, like most political pamphlets, were highly praised, and represented as irresistibly convincing, by all who were of the writer's opinion, before they read them. The praises were so loud, and so often repeated, that many who never before thought on political subjects, and some who had

long renounced the practice of reading on any subject, were induced to peruse them with avidity. Politics became the universal topic of conversation, and political pamphlets the fashionable study ; it extended to both sexes and to every condition. Novels lay neglected, like sermons, on the shelves of the booksellers ; and the manufacturer suspended that labour which was to procure his dinner, that he might finish the *Essai sur les Privileges*, and be able to answer this important question, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-Etat ?*

The effect of these lucubrations was, very often to make people complain of oppressions which they had never before felt, and view those with hatred whom they had before regarded with love and respect.

In some of the publications it was proposed, that the representatives of the Tiers Etat, at the assembly of the States, should consist of a number equal to the Noblesse and the Clergy.

Some

Some people thought this of little importance ; because they believed that the Assembly would vote by orders, and not by individual voices ; in which case the Tiers, whatever their number was, would have but one vote.

Others on the contrary thought it of considerable importance, even although it should be decided that the three classes, of which the States-General were to consist, should vote by orders ; because, in a variety of cases which might occur independent of voting, the influence of six hundred deputies might carry points in the Assembly, when that of three hundred would have failed.

But it was not very difficult to foresee, that, if it were once determined that the Tiers-Etat should consist of twice as many deputies as either of the other two orders, that determination would in all probability prove also decisive of the other question, of the manner in which the States should
vote :

vote : for, on the supposition that all the three orders consisted of the same number of deputies, the Noblesse and the Clergy joining, which it was natural to think they would do, would be able to carry every question against the Tiers ; whereas, if the latter consisted of double the number, they, with a small addition from the other two orders, which they were certain of having, would carry every question against them : and it could not be doubted, that they would begin by securing the great and important point, that the Assembly should *not* vote by orders, but by individual votes. It was a matter, therefore, of the utmost importance, what number of deputies the third order should be directed to send to the Assembly of the States.

M. Necker, finding the public impatience for the assembling the States-General to increase every day, appointed certain persons to search historical registers, and make a report

port respecting the plans and forms that had been observed in constituting the Assembly of the States on former occasions.

A report was made accordingly ; but it was not deemed of sufficient authority by M. Necker for any measure to be founded on it. Some have asserted, that the true reason of this report not being published or acted on was, that no instance was discovered of the Tiers having deputed a double number to the Assembly of the States-General. M. Necker, therefore, prevailed on the King to convene the Notables, and take their opinion on this very delicate subject. They were summoned, and they assembled accordingly ; but before the Notables had given any formal opinion on the subject, the Parliament of Paris, which had been so lately restored to the exercise of its functions, took a step which surprised many, was directly in opposition to the conduct which had occasioned the banishment of the members,

and which ruined them for ever with the popular party. They passed a decree, ordaining that the States should be constituted in the same manner they had been in the year 1614, when the Tiers-Etat had about the same number of representatives with each of the other two orders.

The various Parliaments of France, particularly that of Paris, had on certain occasions, when Government was weak, refused to enregister the King's edicts, and thereby conveyed an idea that their sanction was necessary to give them force. This was usurping a share in the legislation which it was never intended they should possess ; but in which they had been supported by the people, because the remonstrances of the Parliaments against oppressive taxes and other oppressions had occasionally proved a check on the arbitrary power of Government.

These lawyers, therefore, who bought
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their offices in the Parliament, had wrought themselves into an importance which it was not originally intended they should have; and although they formed a peculiar species of aristocracy between the Commons and the Noblesse, they were all that the people of France had for their representatives, and their only defence against the injustice and rapacity of Ministers.

The Parliament of Paris, on the present occasion, may have been afraid of the consequence of the Tiers having a double number of representatives, as a measure which might diminish their own power; but it is probable that they were prompted to this measure by the influence of the Notables, with a view of rendering their own decision more palatable to the public. Without this supposition, it seems highly improbable that the Parliament would have ventured to decide a point of this nature, while it was actually under reference to the Notables.

If,

If, however, their decision had been in favour of the double number claimed by the Tiers, there is no question but that their conduct would have been praised by the public as highly becoming, instead of being decried as impertinent and officious.

In the mean time the Notables continued their deliberations. They were divided into different bureaux or committees, as on the former occasion. The committee of which *Monsieur* was President decided, by the majority of a single vote, that the third order should delegate double the number of members. All the other Committees, and there were ten or a dozen, decided that the Third Order should only have an equal number*.

After the Notables had pronounced their

* During this second Assembly of Notables, the Duke of Orleans seldom appeared at Versailles, and never presided at the Committee of which he was President.

opinions in so decisive a manner in favour of the Noblesse and Clergy, it was to be expected that the Minister would direct the States to be constituted and to assemble according to the rule which the court, to which he himself had referred the matter, had recommended; for nobody could have imagined that the principal persons of the nation would have been formally assembled, and their advice asked on purpose to reject it.

Their advice *was* rejected however: the King's proclamation, by which the States-General were ordered to be constituted and assembled, appointed that the number of the deputies from the Tiers-Etat should be *equal to that of the two others united.*

People were much at a loss to account for M. Necker's motive for a conduct apparently so inconsistent.

Some assert that, when M. Necker summoned the Notables, he really wished the
business

business arranged in the manner he was convinced *they* would determine, by recommending only an equal number of deputies to the Tiers ; but that after they had given their opinion, he was assured that, if that method was adopted, it would ruin his popularity for ever. On this he made his famous report to the Council, on which the proclamation above mentioned was founded.

Others have suspected, that his referring the question to the Notables, publishing their opinion, and then deciding in opposition to it according to the wishes of the people, was a contrivance to raise his popularity to the greatest possible height, by demonstrating that the opinion of the greatest men in the country was of little weight with him in comparison with the desire of the people.

But this is assigning a degree of dissimulation and duplicity to M. Necker, which at

no time belonged to his character. It must have occurred to him, however, that he had little chance of ever acquiring great influence with the Noblesse, the majority of whom despised him on account of his birth, more than they admired him for his talents or integrity. He had as little chance of becoming a favourite with the Clergy, who hated him on account of his particular religion, more than they esteemed him for his general piety: but by augmenting the power of the Tiers Etat, and thus attaching them to him, he might expect to ensure his own, and be enabled to do all the good he intended, and acquire all the renown which his ambition desired.

The Notables gave their decision in the month of December 1788. M. Necker towards the end of the same month laid his report before the Council, concerning the same subject on which the Notables had previously given their opinion. In this

report three questions are stated for the consideration of the Council: the first regards the manner in which the Deputies were to be elected; the second, the number of which those of the third order should consist; and the third question was, whether each order should be obliged to choose the Deputies from their own class, or might elect them from all the three. M. Necker's report was a laboured reasoning on these three questions, all of which he decided differently from the Notables: the second question is by much the most important; and the chief object of M. Necker is to prove the expediency of the *Tiers* having double the number of Deputies.

This report, having been approved by the Council, was published at the beginning of 1789. All Europe were certainly surprised, that a measure, which many foresaw would operate so powerfully against the Crown, should have been recommended by
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the King's Minister, and approved of by his Council : yet M. Necker said, that in this he only followed what he called *le bruit fourd de l'Europe*.

He also déclarés, what nobody will think improbable, that it was the general desire of the Tiers-Etat themselves ; and their desire, he adds, must be considered as the desire of the nation. This seems rather hard on the Noblesse and Clergy, who had been accustomed to consider themselves as a very considerable part of the nation. They were now informed that their importance was nearly gone, and that the best way of retaining a little would be to amalgamate themselves with the general mass of the People. Some of them took the hint very soon afterwards.

Another of M. Necker's reasons, as little flattering for the Noblesse and Clergy as the former, was, that by calling a great number of Deputies from the Tiers, a greater quantity and variety of knowledge useful to Go-

vernment would be concentrated, than by the same number of Deputies from either of the other two orders : but as if he had been afraid that it might be suspected that he meant to insinuate, that the third order of the State had the superiority in every kind of knowledge, that they even excelled the Noblesse in polite accomplishments and the Bishops in divinity, he qualifies the assertion by particularizing commerce, manufactures, agriculture, with the knowledge of finance, and of the properest measures for supporting public credit, as the branches in which the Tiers excelled.

He next admonishes the third order to use the power which is to be devolved to them with prudence and moderation, and by no means ever to think of making use of it to force the Assembly to decide questions by individual votes, but always by their different orders.

M. Necker must have ideas very diffe-

rent from what are generally received regarding the efficacy of advice, and the manner in which newly-acquired power is usually exercised, if he really expected that the third order would act with all the moderation he so wisely advised. What rendered this the less to be expected was, that this order considered themselves as having been for a long period of time very scurvily used by the two others, and might therefore have been suspected of being disposed to indulge in retaliation ; especially as the Christian religion, and the divine precept of doing good for evil, seemed to make less impression than ever on the minds of the French nation at this period.

M. Necker proceeds to assure the King, that he will on the whole be a gainer by the diminution of his own power and the augmentation of that of the people. In the language of philosophy he tells the Monarch, "*La satisfaction attachée à un pouvoir*

sans limite est toute d'imagination. — Votre Majesté, en s'entourant des Députés de la Nation, se délivre d'une suite cruelle d'incertitudes et de balancemens, de desiances et de regrets, qui doivent faire le malheur d'un Prince, tant qu'il demeure sensible au bien de l'état et à l'amour de ses peuples*.”

This argument to persuade a King to abridge his power, because of the sollicitudes which attend it, however ingenious and just it may be, is not more successful than the common one against riches. Men have been long told, that money is the root of all evil, and that heaping up riches is heaping up care. Nobody disputes the truth of the maxims ; but nobody gives away

* The pleasure of unlimited power is imaginary. By surrounding your person with the national Deputies, you will be freed from much anxiety and sollicitude, and many of those sources of regret which create the unhappiness of every Prince endowed with sensibility for the good of the state and the love of his subjects.

money,

money, on purpose to be relieved from care: on the contrary, we see men of immense wealth, whose only pangs and vexations in life arise from money; yet, like the man who put a serpent in his bosom, they hug it, although it stings them, and the more it stings them, they hug it the more.

The argument is seldom used, therefore, in the hope of prevailing on people to resign their riches voluntarily; it is only applied to those who by some accident have lost part of their fortune, to console them for what cannot be helped; and in this sense M. Necker's reasoning must be understood—not as intended to persuade the King to give up power which he could keep, but to comfort him under the loss of what he could not retain.

M. Necker concludes with a supposition of the possibility that the Tiers might not act with all the moderation that was to be wished; in which case he mentions, as his

last advice, a measure from which it is difficult to imagine that any great comfort could flow : “ *Cependant,*” continues he, “ si une difference dans le nombre de Députés du Tiers-Etat devenoit un sujet ou un pretexte de discorde ; si, par des vues particulieres, on cherchoit à lasser l’honorable constance de V. M. ; si votre volonté, Sire, n’étoit pas suffisante pour lever ces obstacles ; alors quel conseil pourrai-je donner à V. M. ? Un seul, et ce seroit le dernier, celui de sacrifier le Ministre qui auroit eu le plus de part à votre deliberation*.”

As this last measure could remedy none

* Nevertheless, if a difference in the number of Deputies of the Tiers-Etat becomes a subject or a pretence of discord ; if, from private views, they tried to tire your Majesty’s constancy ; if your will, Sire, should not be sufficient to remove these obstacles ; what advice can I then give to your Majesty ? Only one, and it shall be the last—namely, to sacrifice the Minister who has had the principal share in advising you to this measure.

of

of the mischiefs supposed to be done by the advice which the Minister had prevailed on the King to follow; and as it will appear of small importance in the eyes of most people, it is a little surprising that M. Necker mentions it with so much emphasis.

Sensible that his influence in the cabinet depended on his popularity, and believing that his popularity would be ruined, if the favourite point of a double representation of the Tiers was not carried, he persuaded the King into that measure; yet it is not difficult to perceive his fears, lest a bad use should be made of it, breaking through his reasoning in its favour.

His ambition lulled his fears, and tempted him to risk all the evils which threatened, but which his vanity made him believe he had ability to overcome. Had he foreseen with certainty half the mischiefs that were the consequence of that measure,

measure, no consideration could have prevailed on M. Necker to advise it; for he unquestionably had the prosperity of the French nation sincerely at heart, as his greatest ambition was to be the instrument of it. Although born a republican, he was of opinion that a republican form of government neither suited the extent of the French empire, nor the character of the French people. He was the friend of Liberty; but thought she could be sure of a permanent and happy residence in France under a limited monarchical form of government only: yet his conduct immediately before the assembling of the States-General, and for some time afterwards, has been thought to have greatly contributed to the destruction of monarchy in France, and to the establishment of a republic which hitherto seems of a more terrible nature than any government that ever was known, in as much as it seems to combine

combine all the tyranny of which republicans accuse monarchy, with all the anarchy of which the friends of monarchy accuse republics.

CHAPTER VI.

*The Nobility of Great Britain and Ireland—
The Noblesse of France.*

THE Deputies to the States-General being elected were, in the terms of the King's proclamation, to assemble at Versailles, and the Assembly was to be opened on the fifth of May 1789.

The public at large expected the redress of many grievances, and the reformation of many abuses, from this Assembly; but as the Noblesse and Clergy enjoyed many privileges and immunities at the expence of the Tiers-Etat, it may easily be imagined that a number of those would appear abuses in the eyes of the latter, which were regarded as wise institutions by the former.

The privileges possessed, and the superiority

riority assumed, by the Noblesse of France over the inferior orders, were evils of greater magnitude than they may seem to those Englishmen who judge by the impression which the privileges and conduct of the Nobility of their own country make on the minds of their countrymen.

The precedency and distinctions which the Nobility enjoy in common society in England are never refused, unless when arrogated; and therefore are seldom or never assumed, but always granted.

When the Peerage is possessed by persons of truly great and amiable characters, which sometimes happens, all the world are pleased to see honours so well bestowed. When the reverse is the case, those who afford the example generally have the privileges and distinctions of the Peerage so cruelly counterbalanced by other moral and physical circumstances, that on the whole they are far from being the objects of envy.

It

It has been asserted, that those British Peers who form examples of the first alternative were not born to the Peerage, but obtained it on account of their distinguished merit, and therefore form no exception to the pernicious effect of hereditary honours. But there is more satire than truth in this observation; for, after all that can be alleged of the torpor which the certainty of enjoying honourable distinction independent of personal merit may throw on the mind; there are instances of men born to the highest titles and greatest fortune, who nevertheless have added lustre to their country and to human nature by the most powerful virtuous exertions.

The privileges of the British Nobility, when compared with those of the Noblesse of France before the Revolution, will in general be found at once more valuable and less invidious: they are ascertained by the known laws of the land, fully understood, and,

and, for the most part, cheerfully acquiesced in.

The most important of those privileges consists in the hereditary share they have in the legislature; not in their forming a part of the pageantry of a Court, or in having their lands exempt from taxation.

The Peers of Great Britain are few in number. The Peerage being confined to the person who has the patent, and not passing to more than one of his descendants; the brothers and sons of a Peer, whether Baron, Earl, or Duke, are Commoners. This naturally forms a strong connection between the Peers and Commons, which is constantly cemented by intermarriages, by friendship, by the reciprocal power of being of service to each other, and of course by mutual attentions and good offices.

So great a portion of the Commons of Great Britain being connected by these various bonds with the Peerage; should ever

the privileges of the latter be attacked, a strong phalanx of the former would immediately appear in their defence.

The situation of the French Noblesse, with respect to the Commons, or, as they call them, Roturiers, was very different. The privileges of the former were in many instances vague, unascertained by positive law, and depending merely on ancient usage.

The importance of a British Peer, and the consideration in which he is held at Court, particularly by the Minister, depend in a great measure on his influence and popularity in the country. The importance of a French Nobleman depended entirely on Court favour, and dwindled into nothing at the frown of his Sovereign.

A British Peer, therefore, has a strong motive to cultivate the good will of all the inhabitants around his estate; whereas a French Marquis or Duke had no motive
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but the sentiments of benevolence and humanity, to behave with attention and kindness to the peasantry. Motives of that nature were no doubt sufficient with many ; but the inferior orders of mankind always were, and always will be, treated with more regard by their superiors, when they have something in their power to bestow in return, than when that is not the case.

The Noblesse of France were not legislators, nor did they form a court of law in the last resort, as the Peers of Great Britain ; but they had the right of appointing judges for the decision of both criminal and civil causes on their own domains, as well as other invidious privileges which have been long abolished in England. It is believed by many people in this country, that the lands of the Noblesse were entirely free from taxes. This is a mistake ; they are subject to the vingtieme, which, as there are three, is equivalent to a dixieme and a half ; the

Noblesse were also subject to the capitation; but as they certainly were free from the taille, and had many advantages in other respects as well as in the article of taxation, this tended to render them unpopular and odious to their fellow-subjects who did not enjoy the same privileges.

Letters of Noblesse were not very difficult to be obtained in France; and when obtained, the same dignity and all the privileges were transmitted to all the descendants of the person ennobled.

They were by no means, it is true, considered as on a footing with the ancient Nobility; but they immediately entered into the possession of every odious privilege, which they were apt to exercise in the most odious manner. The consciousness of belonging to an ancient and honourable family, and the respect that is spontaneously accorded to those who enjoy that advantage, preclude all jealousy or solicitude on the

the subject, and in general render their behaviour natural and polite: but new and unaccustomed dignities often inspire weak minds with a disposition to display supercilious airs and a ridiculous deportment towards those whom they then consider as their inferiors, and from whom they are jealous of a want of respect, because of their late equality.

Something of this kind is observable even in England, particularly in the wives of new-created Baronets, and the families of new-created Peers; but in England airs of this kind are received with such contempt, and sometimes repelled with such severity, that they are seldom assumed.

But the exuberant plantation of Noblesse in France was so extensive, and the branches sometimes so extravagant and cumbersome, that it tended to check and depress the natural and most useful vegetation of the soil: for in that country the airs of superiority,

riority, which the most petulant part of the Nobility were apt to assume, were more difficult to repress, and were apparent in every place. Even at the table of the citizen, the deportment of Monsieur le Comte or Marquis often reminded the entertainer of the honour done him by their condescending to accept of his entertainment. The smile of protection, the proud politeness, the gesture, the tone, and a thousand circumstances, marked the vast distance that was conceived to be between them, and told him as distinctly as any language, that, although he had dug a fortune from the dirty mines of commerce, he must still preserve a slavish submission in the company of gentlemen. The lowest of the Noblesse disclaimed all connection with the highest roturier; no cordial bond of union, no reciprocation of good offices, no friendship, could subsist between the two ranks. They were two distinct planets, one of which disdained to
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be connected with, or influenced by, the motions of the other ; the interval between them being filled with an atmosphere of repulsive particles which kept the two spheres asunder, and prevented their moving harmoniously in the same system.

The comparative moderation and unassuming behaviour observable in the British Nobility towards their fellow citizens, is not to be imputed so much to any original difference in their disposition from that of those of the same cast in France or other countries, as to the government and customs of England, which do not tolerate that degree of insolence that was formerly displayed with impunity in France, and still continues in other countries in Europe : for although we see men in this country of high rank, who take as warm an interest in the general rights of their countrymen, and in the maintenance of the British Constitution, as in any private rights of their own—men

who have such a horror at oppression that no degree of power could render them tyrannical—yet we are not certain that even these men would have possessed this degree of equity, if they had not been educated under impartial laws.

The usual effect of a tyrannical and partial Government is to render the powerful unfeeling, and the weak abject. “ Les esclaves,” says Rousseau, “ perdent tout dans leur servitude, jusqu’au desir d’en sortir ; comme les compagnons d’Ulysse aimoient leur abrutissement*.”

That this natural effect did not continue to operate in France, was owing to the numerous writings which have appeared in the language of that country, and particularly those of Rousseau himself. Those

* Slaves, says Rousseau, are so debased by their situation, that they lose all sentiment, even the desire of being emancipated ; like the companions of Ulysses, who loved the brutal state into which they were sunk.

writings,

writings, in which the debasing influence of despotism and the happy effects of liberty were exhibited in the most glowing language, with other incidental causes, continuing to act on the heated and elastic minds of Frenchmen, at last overcame all compression, and produced an explosion of wide and lamentable devastation.

To arrest the ruinous effects of this, and prevent other events of the same nature, requires more wisdom and delicacy than any thing which ever engaged the attention of those who are entrusted with the government of the different nations of Europe.

The embers of this eruption, which have been thrown, for example, on a soil fortunately so ill adapted to their reception as that of England, would, it is probable, cool of themselves without any other mischief than the detested odour of their exhalation ; whereas, if, from an imprudent zeal to disperse them, they should be stirred with

violence, they may communicate their fire, and spread new flames.

To return to our subject.—It may reasonably be believed, that the numbers of the Noblesse of France might have been restricted, and some of their privileges removed, with more security to the Constitution which was afterwards established, than was produced by abolishing the order altogether. But it is evident, that there was so great a difference between the situation of the Peerage of Great Britain and that of the Noblesse of France, that the same person who is of opinion that the abolition of the privileges of the latter was necessary for the freedom and happiness of France, may also be convinced, that the maintenance of those of the former is a security for the freedom and happiness of Great Britain.

CHAPTER VII.

The Assembly of the States-General—Jealousies—Disputes respecting the Verification of the Powers of the Deputies—The King attempts to conciliate the Three Orders—The Tiers-Etat postpone his Compromise—Artful Proposal of the Clergy—Eluded by the Commons—The Solitude of the King—The Tiers-Etat proceed to the Verification of the Returns without the other two Orders, and assume the Legislative Government—Dispute concerning the Name the Assembly should assume—Observations and Discourses of Mirabeau.

A LITTLE before the meeting of the States-General, and during the heat and commotion which elections and party animosity always produce in a populous city, a catastrophe of a melancholy nature

took place, the source of which has never been clearly ascertained.

A man of an excellent character, of the name of Reveillon, carried on an immense paper manufactory in the suburb of St. Antoine, by which he employed a great number of the poor in that quarter. A report was spread that he intended to diminish the wages of the workmen; and what rendered this more alarming to these poor people and their families, there was a scarcity of bread at the time in which this rumour arose. The bare falsehood was soon accompanied with many additional and aggravating circumstances, and particularly certain expressions of an insulting nature to the distresses of the poor were repeated as having been used by M. Reveillon.

Although nothing could be more opposite to the general conduct and character of the man, these rumours were readily believed by the unthinking multitude.

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They dragged the figure of a man with a label around the neck, inscribed with the name of Reveillon and with the offensive words he was said to have uttered, to the Place de Greve, and there performed the ceremony of an execution. Having passed the night in drinking and riot, they went the following day and burst into M. Reveillon's house, destroyed his furniture, burnt his books and papers, broke into his cellars, increasing their fury by renewed intoxication.

There had been a relaxation in the police of Paris unknown before that period, during the whole time occupied in the elections. The Lieutenant of Police, from timidity or negligence, had taken no measure for crushing this insurrection at the beginning. A party of soldiers, too weak for the purpose, were sent when it was too late, to protect the house of M. Reveillon ; they were repulsed by the pillagers. A large body of the French and Swiss guards then marched
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against them with two pieces of artillery. After having in vain summoned the mob around the house to retire, the commanding officer ordered the soldiers to fire over the heads of the multitude, in the hope that it would have intimidated and dispersed them. It had a contrary effect : the multitude pelted the guards with stones from the streets, the windows and the top of the house. By a second fire the enraged soldiers killed a considerable number of the rabble ; and then, rushing into the house, put all to the sword whom they found in the rooms or in the cellars. The scene was horrible ; above one hundred of the populace are said to have been slaughtered ; a considerable number of the military were wounded, and a few killed.

It has been repeatedly asserted by one party, that the source of this melancholy affair was a manœuvre of the Court, to furnish a pretext for ordering so large a
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body of troops near the capital and Versailles as would overawe the populace, and render the Assembly of the States more complaisant to the views of the Court than they were supposed to be.

On the other hand the partisans of the Court have asserted, that the insurrection was excited, at a great expence of money, by certain leaders of the popular party, on purpose to shew the people their own strength and the weakness of Government, and to intimidate the King into acquiescence with their measures.

As neither party have been able to establish their assertions on any thing like proof, the probability is, that both are unfounded; and that the commotion which was attended with such fatal consequences originated either in private malice against M. Reveillon, or simply in a false report hastily believed by a profligate populace, whose
natural

natural credulity was sharpened by the scarcity of bread and the hope of pillage.

When a nation is divided in opinion on subjects which heat the understanding and inflame the passions, there is hardly any wickedness of which one party is not capable of accusing the other; and by these reciprocal accusations of crimes, which perhaps neither was capable of committing, they become familiarized with ideas which they never before entertained, and are gradually prepared for deeds which they would otherwise have shrunk from with horror.

On the day of the assembling of the States-General, the Deputies attended the King to the church of St. Lewis at Versailles, where they heard a sermon preached by the Bishop of Nancy. The drift of this discourse was to prove, that all wise legislators had cherished religion, as the purest source of happiness to nations, or, as he expressed

pressed it, la source unique et intarissable de leur prospérité. The sermon was abundantly interspersed with praises of the King; and the Queen was apostrophized in the following terms: "Fille des Césars, emule et confidente des bienfaits de ton auguste epoux*!" There is certainly nothing extraordinary in a Bishop's praising religion in a church, or a King and Queen in a sermon preached before themselves; but it is a subject of melancholy reflection to think how all the three have been treated since by some of those who heard their praises with applause at that time; and it is impossible not to imagine, that if the French nation had not been deprived of all regard for the first, they never would have behaved in the barbarous manner they did to the two last. It is likewise worthy

* Daughter of the Cæsars! You who emulate and are the confidente of the benevolent actions of your august husband!

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of notice, that the state in which the inhabitants of France have been since they lost religious impressions, is no refutation of the Bishop's doctrine.

From the church the King went to the hall appointed for the States. He was seated on a throne erected for the purpose, the Queen placing herself at his side on a seat not so high as that of the King; the Royal Family were seated around; the Clergy on one side of the hall, and the Noblesse on the other; the Tiers-Etat at the bottom.

Such an assembly, the representatives of a great nation, and, above all, the purpose for which they were convened, to reform long-continued and severely felt abuses, and to make regulations on which the happiness of millions of human beings in a great measure depended, must have produced warm emotion, and raised the highest expectation.

The King pronounced a discourse adapted
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to the occasion, which was followed by one from the keeper of the seals; and the meeting concluded with a very long one from M. Necker, which however was more attended to than either of the other two.

Considering the different views, interests, and prejudices of the auditory, M. Necker must have possessed more address than falls to the lot of humanity, to have composed a discourse which would have entirely pleased an audience whose views and wishes were so different, and the minds of many of them so ill disposed towards the speaker. The Nobles looked on him as a low-born upstart, who by intrigue and talents fit for a counting-house had wriggled himself into a situation to which he had no right: the Clergy were jealous of him as a Protestant: and as M. Necker's discourse did not point directly to the object aimed at by the Deputies of the Tiers-Etat, whose views were the most exalted, they also were displeased

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with it ; and they would have been still more so, if they had not perceived that it displeased the Noblesse and the Clergy.

There existed a great jealousy in the three orders which composed the Assembly ; two of them dreading to be stripped of privileges they had long enjoyed, and the third being filled with indignation at the degradation and oppression under which they had long suffered : to this original jealousy, which already burned with too great heat in the breasts of some of the Deputies, certain circumstances of a frivolous nature served as additional fuel. In the ceremonial of presenting the Deputies to the King, a distinction, which it would have been wiser to have omitted, was made between the two first orders and the third. In admitting the Clergy and Noblesse, both foldings of the door were thrown open, and they were received by the King in his cabinet : but in admitting the Deputies of the Tiers-Etat

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the opening of one half of the door was thought sufficient ; and they were received by his Majesty in a kind of anti-chamber. This circumstance of the door might have been thought equally unpolite, but it would not have been quite so imprudent, if the Tiers-Etat had not previously obtained a double representation.

Such distinctions may be proper for keeping up the idea of superiority, when neither the superiority itself nor the power of supporting it is to be called in question ; but when the first is disputed, and the second declining, they had best not be brought forward. The very circumstance of the States-General being summoned was of itself a proof that the Tiers-Etat were not to be treated with the appearance of indignity. Insolence, when supported by power, is mean ; without that support it is ridiculous. Instead of permitting any appearance of that kind, the Court would have done well to

have considered the state of the public mind at the time: that those to whom the marks of disregard were shewn, formed, by the concession of the King himself, one half of the Assembly, and were the representatives of the majority of the nation—a nation distinguished for spirit and ingenuity, among whom science and the arts had been cultivated with nearly *as much* success even in the opinion of their greatest rival, with *more* in the opinion of the rest of Europe, and with *a great deal more* in their own opinion, than in any other country in the world: that those men came fraught with the idea, that they had been oppressed by the Court, insulted by the Nobles, imposed on by the Clergy, and were instructed by their constituents to require redress.—Had these considerations been duly attended to, every invidious and unnecessary distinction, and every circumstance which could be conceived to add irritation to minds already

already highly irritated, and too ready perhaps to construe things indifferent in themselves into cause of provocation, would have been avoided.

The dress of ceremony prescribed for the different orders afforded matter of offence also: that of the Noblesse and higher Clergy was of itself pompous, which some of them spared no expence in rendering still more magnificent by additional ornaments; that of the Tiers-Etat consisted simply of the little black cloak worn by lawyers, which, when attached to the shoulders of those who did not wear black, had a preposterous and mean appearance. But when it was observed that this was a subject of ridicule to some of the Noblesse, the People, however disposed they may be in general to laugh at pitiful jokes, obstinately refused to give any encouragement to this, and shewed the highest respect for the motley-clothed Deputies, cheering them with repeated shouts of

Vive le Tiers-Etat ! while they allowed their splendid rivals to pass in procession unnoticed. So that in a short time a little black cloak on a brown thread-bare coat became respectable ; and afterwards, when the cloaks were laid aside, on the conversion of the States-General into a National Assembly, a great plainness or rather shabbiness of dress was, upon the same principle, considered as a presumption of patriotism.

This might have served as a warning to Administration and the Clergy, to be exceedingly cautious how they proceeded ; for after the nation had proved, by this instance, that they were capable of a sudden and complete change of opinion on a subject which had always occupied them so much as that of dress, it was to be expected that they might alter their way of thinking, with still greater ease, on matters which hitherto had appeared to be of far less importance to them—namely, Government and Religion.

Before

Before the Assembly could proceed to the business for which it was convoked, the verification of the powers of the Deputies was necessary, and for this purpose their writs of return were to be examined. The Nobility and Clergy proposed, that this should be done by each of the orders separately, in a chamber appropriated for itself: but the Third Estate were of a different way of thinking; for although they had gained the point of a double representation, they knew that the Court partly expected that it would be rendered of little importance, by the resolution the Nobles and Clergy had formed not to vote by poll, but by orders, each invested with the privilege of putting a negative on the decision of the other two. M. Necker himself had, in his discourse at the opening of the Assembly, talked in such equivocal terms on this head, that each party might have imagined he favoured their wishes. Yet that they should guard

against voting by orders, and secure the point of voting by poll, formed a principal article in the instructions of many Deputies for the Third Estate ; and they were aware, that if a precedent were once established of doing business of any kind separately, that single instance might prove decisive of the question. When they assembled in the common hall, therefore, they resolved that the three orders should verify their powers together ; and finding that the Nobles and Clergy did not join them, they separated without proceeding to the verification of their own powers : and when they met afterwards, they declared it was only as individuals, without any political character or right to act ; and that they waited for the two other orders in the common hall, that the verification of their powers might be made in the only valid way, when all were present.

In this state things continued for several weeks ;

weeks; the Noblesse and Clergy meeting in their respective halls, and the Deputies of the Third Estate assembling daily in the common hall, but abstaining from verifying their powers on account of the absence of the other orders.

The Commons, having the voice and affections of the vast majority of the nation with them, and being convinced that this circumstance must render them victorious, made a shew of great temper and moderation. They sent repeated messages to the Nobles, in the most respectful terms inviting them to the hall, that the great interests of the nation might not be retarded. Receiving no satisfactory answer from them, the Commons sent a deputation to the Clergy, inviting them to the common hall, that they might mutually deliberate on the most effectual means of restoring tranquillity and happiness to the nation. On this occasion the Commons conjured the Clergy to agree

agree to their request *in the name of the God of Peace*. This form of entreaty was adopted as peculiarly applicable to those who called themselves the servants of the God of Peace, and in the belief that it could not be rejected without their being thought disrespectful to their master, and of course without being of prejudice to them in the minds of the People.

The Clergy, who were sensible of the value of popularity in the present exigency, and who considered the pathetic terms of the exhortation as turning their own artillery against them, determined to retaliate, by pushing the Commons into a troublesome dilemma, and perhaps stealing from them some of their popularity. For this purpose they sent a deputation to the Third Estate, lamenting the miserable condition of the people, arising from the high price of bread, and proposing that a committee, drawn from each of the three orders, should be appointed

to concert the speediest means for alleviating the distresses of the poor.

The Clergy thought it would be difficult to elude a proposal, whose object was to relieve the distresses of the people ; and knew at the same time, that a Committee appointed in the manner they proposed would have functioned, in a great measure, future deliberations in which the distinction of orders should be preserved—which was precisely what the two superior classes had in view : and the Clergy were in hopes that the Commons would be driven either to consent to agree to the Committee, or run the risk of displeasing the people by refusing to concur with such a benevolent measure.

The Third Estate were not caught by the snare that was laid for them. Comprehending fully all that was intended by this proposition, they precluded its consequences by the following answer to the Clergy :

“ Penetrated

“ Penetrated with the same sense of duty that you are, and affected even to tears at the distress of the people, we entreat and conjure you to *unite instantly with us in the common hall*, to concert measures for the remedy of these calamities.”

Instead of hastening to meet the Commons with the expedition which their message and the urgency of the case imported, the Clergy returned for answer, that they would continue to meditate on the properest means of relieving the distresses of the poor, which they acknowledged to be an object of the most important and interesting nature, and which they had infinitely at heart, but that most unfortunately there was not a sufficient number of Deputies present in their hall to decide on so weighty a business.

Each party, perceiving that their real designs were seen, dropped any farther use of pretexts which deceived neither; the name of the God of Peace was no more mentioned;
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the high price of bread gave no farther uneasiness ; and the poor were left in the same distress as before.

In the mean time the King seemed to have the general prosperity more at heart, and to be more ready to make sacrifices for obtaining it, than any of the three orders : for while two of them were obstinately insisting on verifying the powers of the Deputies apart, and the third declaring that it should be done together, other important business was suspended, to the great loss of the public ; and besides, in plain common sense, it would seem, that no particular order, nor all the three orders united, could with propriety verify the powers of the Deputies. This right evidently belonged to the King. The Assembly of the States had been called by his proclamation ; it belonged to him to examine whether the Deputies had been elected according to the terms of the proclamation. It would appear absolutely requisite, that he should authorize those at

least who were to begin the verification; for with what propriety could men scrutinize or verify the powers of their brother Deputies, whose own powers had not been examined and verified? Without insisting, however, on what seemed to be his right, he proposed, as a conciliatory measure, that they should verify their powers separately, communicate the verification to each other; and, in case any disputable matter should arise on which they could not agree, he offered to be the umpire.

The Noblesse and Clergy agreed to the King's proposals, and appointed commissaries to meet with those of the Commons; who on their part, without directly rejecting the compromise, declared that they postponed their final decision until they should receive the report of their commissioners after the conference. It was evident that they were resolved it should come to nothing: new matter of dispute arose, as was pre-determined, at the conferences which

which were held in presence of the Minister ; and the King's mediation, to his great mortification, proved ineffectual.

With an aversion to intrigues of every kind, and little relish for the magnificence of a court or the exercise of power, the good-natured Prince supremely desired the happiness of his subjects and his own tranquillity. He had long endeavoured to moderate the dissensions of the contending parties ; and their increasing animosity greatly afflicted his mind. “ Je n'ai eu depuis quelques années que *des instans* de bonheur,” said he to M. Necker, speaking of the violence of the parties and their reciprocal accusations, and perhaps under the general apprehension of some of the subsequent evils. As to the complicated and unexampled atrocities that have taken place since, they could not have entered into his imagination, or scarcely into that of the most gloomy-minded prophet of evil that ever lived.

It

It is painful to reflect, that a Prince so averse from disturbing the peace of others should have his own so cruelly destroyed ; while those who, from ambitious or selfish views, anxiously seek for a cause of discord, cry havock and let loose the dogs of war, are permitted to pass their lives in luxurious ease.

There was this striking difference between the conduct of the Noblesse and the Tiers-État, that the latter, by persisting in a plan of apparent moderation and even inactivity, allowed their popularity, or in other words their power, to increase ; whereas the former swelled in the pride of their pretensions as their power dwindled, and proceeded to the verification of the powers of their Deputies in their own particular hall, and to other acts, as if they were a complete and legal Assembly ; without considering that they thereby weakened themselves on the side on which the most dangerous
 attack

attack was to be expected, and where they were already too weak. While they thus ruined their own popularity, they increased that of the Third Order, and furnished them with an example, which they followed as soon as they thought they would be supported by the approbation of the public.

Having made a new effort for the union of the orders, by summoning all the Deputies, including those of the Noblesse and Clergy, they declared that they would proceed to the verification of the returns ; and after that ceremony, those Deputies whose powers should be then verified in the common hall would be constituted a legal assembly, and would instantly assume the legislative authority.

On the thirteenth of June they accordingly began to call the Deputies, and to verify the powers of those who appeared ; in which number were none of the order of Nobility, and only three of that of the

M

Clergy.

Clergy. A few more of the latter joined them the following day ; and on the 17th of the same month the Tiers-Etat, with this small junction from the Clergy, assumed to themselves the legislative government of France, amidst the applause of a prodigious multitude of spectators.

This great and important act of power met with no opposition ; but when the title which the Assembly should assume came to be mentioned, a long debate ensued, which was carried on with more heat than could have been expected from the subject. On this occasion the speakers displayed such powers of verbal criticism, and such a degree of dialectic subtlety and metaphysical discrimination, as is more suitable to grammarians and professors than to statesmen and legislators. One member proposed, that the Assembly should be denominated “ *Assemblée légitime des représentans de la majeure partie de la nation, agissant en l’absence* ”

fence de la mineure partie." Others proposed titles still more tedious and complex. The Abbé Sieyes recommended the following : "Assemblée des représentans connus et vérifiés de la nation Française;" and supported it with much metaphysical ingenuity.

In the reply which Mirabeau made to the Abbé's arguments, he shewed the inconvenience which might arise from applying metaphysics to the exercise of government or legislation. The following extract from Mirabeau's discourse is no bad specimen of his eloquence. Mirabeau recommended the simple name of "Representatives of the French People," acknowledging that those proposed by the Abbé Sieyes and others were more conformable to certain theoretical opinions, and what might be expected from philosophers and metaphysicians. It would have been happy for the French nation, that the Assembly in forming their Constitution had paid more attention to the follow-

ing remark made by Mirabeau on this occasion : “ Il est cette différence essentielle entre le metaphysicien, qui, dans la meditation du cabinet, saisit la verité dans son energique pureté, et l’homme d’état qui est obligé de tenir compte des antécédens, des difficultés, des obstacles ; il est, dis-je, cette différence entre l’instruteur du peuple et l’administrateur politique, que l’un ne songe qu’à *ce qui est*, et l’autre s’occupe de *ce qui peut etre*.

“ Le metaphysicien, voyageant sur une mappe-monde, franchit tout sans peine, ne s’embarrasse ni des montagnes, ni des déserts, ni des fleuves, ni des abymes ; mais quand on veut realiser le voyage, quand on veut arriver au but, il faut se rappeler sans cesse qu’on marche sur la terre, et qu’on n’est plus dans le monde idéal*.”

After

* There is an essential difference between the metaphysician who in his study seizes truth in all its energetic

After a long discussion, however, the name of National Assembly was proposed by M. le Grand, and adopted by the majority ; on which the hall resounded with the cry of *Vivent le Roi et l'Assemblée Nationale !*

This debate, respecting the name by which the Assembly was to be called, reminds us of the dispute which took place in the year 1689 between the Peers and Commons of England, on the words *abdicated* and *deserted* ; which, however, was not merely verbal ; for it is more conformable with Tory principles to declare, that a King,

getic purity, and the statesman who is obliged to consider antecedents, difficulties, obstacles ; there is this difference, I say, between the instructor of the people and the political administrator, that the one only thinks of what really is, and the other of what may be.

The metaphysician, travelling on the map, passes over mountains, deserts, rivers, and abysses, without difficulty ; but he who intends to make the journey in good earnest, must keep constantly in his mind, that he is to travel on this earth, and not in an ideal world.

in consequence of mal-administration and having withdrawn himself out of the kingdom, had *deserted* the government, than that he had *abdicated* it; the Tories, therefore, contended strenuously for the former. The genuine Whig principle dictated the decisive word *forfeited*, as preferable to either; and accordingly that word was adopted by the Scottish Parliament, which kept no measures with the Tories of their country: but the English Whigs, as Hume remarks, having been joined by the Tories in bringing about the Revolution, waved a word which was offensive to them, and, by way of compromise, used *abdicated*—to which the Tories of the House of Peers were at last pleased to agree.

The word *Peuple* having by the French been long applied to the lowest order only, it was considered by many members as lowering the Deputies to denominate them *Représentans du Peuple François*. Mirabeau, having

having observed this, added : “ Je suis peu inquiet de la signification des mots dans la langue absurde du préjugé ; je parle ici la langue de la liberté, et je m’appuye sur l’exemple des Anglois, sur celui des Américains, qui ont toujours honoré le nom de *Peuple*, qui l’ont toujours consacré dans leurs déclarations, dans leurs lois, dans leur politique. Quand Chatham renferma dans un seul mot la charte des nations, et dit la *Majesté du Peuple* ; quand les Américains ont opposé les droits naturels du Peuple à tout le fatras des publicistes sur les conventions qu’on leur oppose ; ils ont reconnu toute la signification, toute l’énergie de cette expression, à qui la liberté donne tant de valeur*.”

In

* I give no weight to the signification of words according to the absurd language of prejudice ; I here speak the language of liberty, and am supported by the example of the English and of the Americans, who have always respected the name of the *People*, and have always adopted it in their declarations, in their laws, and

In another discourse he acknowledges, that the word *Peuple* was often understood to have the same signification with *Vulgus* in Latin, *Mob* in English, what the aristocrats in France insolently called *Canaille*; and for that very reason he prefers the title of Représentans du *Peuple* François to any other denomination for the Assembly. “ Je persevere dans ma motion,” continued he, “ et dans la seule expression qu’on en avoit attaquée; je veux dire la qualification du *Peuple François*. Je l’adopte, je la defends, je la proclame, par la raison qui la fait combattre.

“ Oui : c’est parce que le nom de Peuple

in their politics. When Chatham compressed the character of nations in a single expression, and pronounced the *Majesty of the People*; when the Americans opposed the *natural Rights of the People* to all the trash published against them; they shewed that they understood the true signification and full energy of an expression, to which freedom gives so great a value.

n’est

n'est pas assez respecté en France ; parce qu'il est obscurci, couvert de la rouille du préjugé ; parce qu'il nous présente une idée dont l'orgueil s'allarme et dont la vanité se révolte ; parce qu'il est prononcé avec mépris dans les chambres des aristocrates ; c'est pour cela même, Messieurs, que je voudrois, c'est pour cela même que nous devons nous imposer, non seulement de le relever, mais de l'ennoblir, de le rendre désormais respectable aux ministres et cher à tous les cœurs.

“ Plus habiles que nous, les héros Bataves qui fondèrent la liberté de leurs pays prirent le nom de Gueux : ils ne voulurent que ce titre, parce que le mépris de leurs tyrans avoit prétendu les en flétrir ; et ce titre, en leur attachant cette classe immense que l'aristocratie et le despotisme avilissoient, fut à la fois leur force, leur gloire, et le gage de leur succès. Les amis de la liberté choisissent le nom qui les sert le mieux, et non celui qui les flatte le plus ; ils s'appelleront les

. Remontrans

Remontrons en Amérique, les Pères en Suisse, les Gueux dans les Pays-Bas ; ils se pareront des injures de leurs ennemis ; ils leur ôteront le pouvoir de les humilier avec des expressions dont ils auront su s'honorer*.”

* I persist in my motion, and in the only expression which is found fault with ; I mean that of *the French People*. I adopt it, I defend it, I proclaim it, for the very reasons for which it is attacked.

Yes : it is because the name of *the People* is not sufficiently respected in France ; because it is obscured and covered with the rust of prejudice ; because it conveys an idea which wounds pride and mortifies vanity ; because it is mentioned with disdain in the houses of aristocrats ; it is for those very reasons that I adopt it—it is for those very reasons that we ought to assume it, ennoble it, and render it respectable in the eyes of Ministers and at Courts.

Those heroes who founded the liberty of Holland, more judicious than we, took the name of Gueux (beggars) ; and they would have no other title, because the pride of their tyrants made them imagine they would be lowered by it ; and *that* very title, by attaching to them that immense class which aristocracy and despotism vilify,

vilify, became at once their strength, their glory, and the pledge of their success. The friends of Liberty chose the name which would best serve her cause, not that which was most flattering to themselves. In Switzerland, they assumed the name of Herdsmen ; in the Low Countries, that of Beggars ; glorying in the injurious appellations of their enemies, and receiving their abuse, not as what could humble them, but as that which did them honour.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mirabeau—Resolutions of the National Assembly—Different Conduct of the different Orders—Inflexible and unfeeling Behaviour of the Tiers-Etat—Imprudent Conduct of the higher Clergy—Popularity of the inferior Clergy—Libels, Lampoons—Universal Prejudice against the Nobles and Clergy—Reflections on the different Light in which the French Revolution is viewed by those in different Situations all over Europe—Mirabeau's Journal—Conference between him and M. Necker.

MIRABEAU had offended many persons of weight in the order to which he himself belonged, by his extravagancies and profligacy, more by his satirical wit, and most of all by a superiority of genius which they could neither contest nor brook.

Perceiving

Perceiving that he had no chance of being chosen a Deputy to the States-General by the Noblesse, he immediately used his endeavours to be chosen by the Tiers-État. His endeavours were successful: he not only was chosen a Deputy for Aix en Provence and Marseilles, that very part of France which had been the scene of his youthful follies, and where his character was best known, but he also acquired a degree of popularity among his constituents, which was never surpassed, and which he retained unimpaired till his death. In general he enjoyed the same popularity in the capital, though during some short intervals he lost it to such a degree, that the populace of Paris called him a traitor, and threatened him with the lanterne; particularly when he opposed the decree excluding the Ministers from being members of the National Assembly, that concerning the King's Veto, and a third on the right of declaring war

and making peace ; yet perhaps he never had more reason on his side, nor did he ever act more in conformity with the political principles which he always professed than on those occasions : for Mirabeau was not a republican.

The knowledge he had of the temper and character of his countrymen, of the history of republics ancient and modern ; his own reflections on the internal commotions that existed during even the most brilliant periods of the Roman commonwealth, the only one which could with propriety be adduced as an example to so extensive a country as France ; the favourable idea he had of the British Constitution ; all those considerations determined his mind in favour of a limited monarchy. But as no man ever possessed in a superior degree the art of gaining the confidence of the people, and of leading a popular assembly ; and as his own importance and power depended on
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the importance of that class who were neither Nobility nor Clergy, he wished to raise them from the debasing light in which they had been long viewed in France, and to secure to them a reasonable degree of power and respect. In contending that the Assembly should adopt the name of *Représentans du Peuple*, he certainly meant no more. He who disliked a government like the ancient Roman republic, because it was composed of a Senate and People only*, must have been more averse to one in which the People alone were Sovereign, which pretended to annihilate all distinctions of rank, and to establish an insipid equality, in which the superiority of talent, which peculiarly distinguished himself, would be considered as a species of aristocracy that might lead to the guillotine.

It was unfortunate for France that Mirabeau was not on good terms with M.

* Senatus Populusque Romanus.

Necker :

Necker : if he had, the talents and address of the former, co-operating with the good intentions and correcting the theories of the latter, as they were both friends to freedom and neither wished for a republic, a practicable government, of a monarchical form and founded on freedom, might have been formed : or at any rate, had Mirabeau lived a few years longer than he did, his discernment would have detected, and his powerful ridicule would have exposed, the folly of those visionary politicians, who, travelling over the world on a map, like his metaphysician, regardless of mountains and rivers, declared that all power came from the people, neglecting to establish at the same time, that the people could exercise no part of that power but must delegate the whole. His triumphant eloquence, it is probable, would have precluded the absurd title of *Peuple Souverain*, and the mischievous ideas which have attended it ; he would have been able to

convince

convince the National Assembly and the Nation at large, that although those Princes who possessed arbitrary power were often cruel and tyrannical, yet it sometimes happened that they were the reverse ; whereas le Peuple Souverain, acting individually and not by representatives, had ever been in all ages and in all countries an unrelenting savage ; that the natural impetuosity of the French national character gave no reason to expect, that he would reign with more moderation in France than elsewhere ; but that, as soon as he should obtain that title and the power which it implies, the innate violence and fury of his disposition would appear ; that he would brandish his pike, overawe the National Assembly, plunge the superior orders into the mire from which he himself had just emerged, murder those who had raised him to power, and overwhelm the land with bloodshed and terror. Such are the horrors which the penetrating genius

of Mirabeau, foreseeing, would have prevented; and they will warn other nations still labouring under despotism, what they have carefully to avoid in their exertions to obtain a free government.

After a discussion which occupied more time, and occasioned more heat, than could have been expected from the mere question of a name for the Assembly, that of *National Assembly* was adopted. The members having taken the oath to fulfil their duty to their country with fidelity, a declaration was made, that the National Assembly being composed of members delegated by an *immense majority of the French Nation*, would remain no longer inactive on account of the absent Deputies or of any particular class of men, but would immediately begin the great work of reformation, for which they had been appointed by their country.

They pronounced, that no tax or imposition was legal that was not confirmed or
 enacted

enacted by the representatives of the nation. That nevertheless, to prevent confusion, the existing taxes should be continued to be levied until they were annulled by the Assembly, or until the Assembly separated. They declared that they would, in concert with his Majesty, take the national debt into consideration as soon as possible ; and in the meantime they put the national creditors under the safeguard of the national faith and honour.

These resolutions were heard with applause by the numerous spectators ; they were carried with all possible expedition to the capital, where they produced the strongest symptoms of joy, which became universal over the nation ; for those who were dissatisfied and alarmed at the proceedings, were obliged to conceal their sentiments in this moment of enthusiasm.

By this act of supremacy without the concurrence of the two other orders, and without waiting for the approbation of the

King, they decided the question which had not been yet agitated, namely, whether the National Assembly should vote individually or by the united voice of each order. They acted not as part of an assembly of men delegated to remedy certain abuses in an existing government, but as a complete assembly authorised to form a new government. In effect, they assumed the whole power of the State.

It has been said, that a different conduct on the part of the two higher orders would have prevented the third from adopting so violent a measure. The same kind of reflection hardly ever fails to be made, when any conduct whatever has unfortunate consequences. As that which the Nobles and Clergy pursued has led to their ruin, it is now clear that they would have been no losers by choosing another. When they saw that the Tiers, with the approbation of the People, were determined that the

powers of all the Deputies should be verified in common, perhaps it would have had a happy and conciliatory effect not to have disputed that point ; their meeting and conversing daily together might have confirmed their union ; whereas the refusal of the two first orders to meet at all became a fresh source of jealousy and hatred, and was perhaps the cause of their being deprived of some privileges which they might have been allowed to retain.

The joy manifested by the nation at the decisive conduct of the Tiers-Etat tended to give them at once fresh courage and additional strength ; whereas it only gave to the other two orders fresh indignation, of which they possessed a sufficient quantity before, and tended to diminish their strength, of which they had not enough.

As the Noblesse and the Clergy had rallied under the Court, were directed in many points by the King's ministers, and

belonged in general to that class of society in which the violence of private passion is more under the restraints of interest or decorum, it might naturally have been expected that they would have conducted themselves with more policy, unanimity, and energy, than the third. The fact, however, was otherwise. We find the Nobles and the Clergy divided among themselves, acting without system or courage, affecting an importance which they no longer had, and making claims which they were afterwards obliged to relinquish; whereas the Commons, from the first meeting of the States-General until the union of the three orders, never advanced a step which they afterwards retracted, never turned to the right hand or to the left, but moved on steadfast to their object, making good every new right which they claimed, although most of them were at first refused,

and

and some of them shockingly ill-timed. Of the last the following is a remarkable example.

Soon after the assembling of the States-General, and during that interval in which the Tiers-Etat seemed to be patiently waiting the moment when the two other orders would unite with them, it was observed that, on sending a deputation to the King, the Deputies of the Third Order were received by the Keeper of the Seals, who according to ancient custom carried their requests to the King, whereas deputations from the Noblesse and Clergy were received by the King in person; the Third Order resolved to put an end to this distinction, and for that purpose appointed a new deputation—ordering at the same time their Dean, M. Bailly, to wait on his Majesty in person, and inform him that the Commons acknowledged no intermediate person.

between the King and his People, and begged to know the time when their deputation should wait on him.

The young Dauphin died on the day when M. Bailly endeavoured to fulfil his commission. When the officer in waiting announced him, the King sent him word to communicate his business in the usual way through the Keeper of the Seals. M. Bailly then waited on the Minister, who having addressed the King on the subject received the following answer :

“ Il m'est impossible, dans les circonstances où je me trouve, de voir M. Bailly ce soir, ou demain matin, ni de fixer un jour pour la députation. Montrez mon billet à M. Bailly pour sa décharge.*”

* It is not possible for me, in my present state of mind, to see M. Bailly this evening or tomorrow morning, nor can I at present fix an hour for receiving the deputation. Shew my note to M. Bailly for his justification.

When

When this billet was read in the Assembly of the Commons, it excited murmurs of discontent. These murmurs, however unreasonable they were, seem to have made an impression at the Court; for soon after M. Bailly received a letter in these terms: "M. le Garde des Sceaux prévient M. Bailly qu'il sort de chez le Roi, où il étoit monté pour prendre ses ordres sur la députation. Quoique sa Majesté soit dans la plus profonde affliction, et que jusqu'ici elle n'ait voulu voir personne, le Roi recevra cependant demain la députation du Tiers-Etat entre onze heures et midi; son intention est que la députation soit au nombre de vingt*."

The

* The Keeper of the Seals informs M. Bailly, that he is just come from the King, on whom he had waited to receive his orders respecting the deputation. Notwithstanding his Majesty's being in the greatest affliction, and that hitherto he has not been able to see any body, he will receive the deputation of the Tiers-Etat tomorrow

The deputation waited on the King accordingly. Its avowed object was to represent the earnest desire of the Third Order to unite with the other two, and to complain of the obstacles by which the Nobles prevented this union, and thereby retarded public business. In the address, which was pronounced by M. Bailly, the Commons also declared that they gloried in their attachment to the person of the King, and that they would be at all times ready to shed their blood and spend their fortunes in support of the true principles of the monarchy. The concluding words were, “ Vos fidelles Communes sont profondément touchées de la circonstance où votre Majesté a la bonté de recevoir leur députation ; et elles prennent la liberté de lui adresser l’expression de tous leurs regrets, et de leur respectueuse sensibilité*.”

This

morrow between eleven and twelve o’clock. He expects that the deputation shall consist of twenty.

* Your faithful Commons are deeply affected at the
circum-

This address, under the circumstances in which it was made, will not be considered as a convincing proof of the respectful sensibility of those who framed it, for the King's affliction; but it is a pretty strong one of the perseverance of the Tiers-Etat in their claims, even during circumstances in which most people will imagine that they might have been at least postponed.

Although the Nobles did not act with all the steadiness and unanimity of the Tiers-Etat, there was but a small number who seceded from the general opinion of their order; but among the Clergy there was a considerable portion whose wishes went not along with the general inclination of theirs. This was supposed to have been owing to the proud deportment of some of the Digni-

circumstances in which your Majesty had the goodness to receive their deputation; and they take the liberty of expressing to you this testimony of their regret and most respectful sympathy.

taries of the Church, who, contrary to the spirit of the religion they professed, are said to have treated their brethren the inferior Clergy with such neglect and apparent contempt, as to annihilate that *esprit de corps* which usually binds men of the same profession together, and inclined them to favour the Tiers-Etat, with many of whom they lived on the footing of equality and friendship. The unpopularity of the higher Clergy appeared strongly during the election of the Deputies, and occasioned a much greater proportion of the inferior class to be elected than would have taken place, had not the former destroyed their natural influence by an imprudent and haughty behaviour.

What the Dignitaries of the Church lost in popularity about this period, the lower orders of the Clergy acquired, and retained until the government of the country was usurped by a set of men devoid of every sentiment

sentiment of religion, gratitude, or compassion.

This did not escape the observation of those who composed the little pieces for the theatre, who of all authors are the most attentive in seizing the reigning fancy of the times, and gratifying the public taste : a Country Curé became all at once a favourite character on the stage, and was often brought forward as the vehicle of patriotic sentiments. Sometimes M. le Curé was exhibited even in a more heroic point of view.

The best apology that can be made for the praise which is so often bestowed on Princes and on men in power who do not deserve it, is, that it sometimes inspires them with a desire of becoming what they are said to be already. Thus we are told, that Augustus was flattered into humanity. In the same manner I have been assured, that many Curés and Parish Priests, who at
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the beginning of the revolution were very cool on the subject, when they understood that they were represented on the stage as patriots and defenders of their country, at length caught fire, and became *what they beheld*—inculcating revolutionary opinions on the minds of their parishioners, and sometimes leading them against detached parties of the enemy. I was myself present at the representation of a little piece in the year 1792, which I was told was founded in truth. The scene of the piece was a small village on the frontiers of France. While the Curé is exhorting a group of the inhabitants to maintain their freedom and defend their country, news is brought that a party of Hulus are at hand; the Curé immediately trusses up his black robe, girds on a sabre, seizes a musket, and marches at the head of his audience to meet the enemy. In the next scene he returns victorious, and is welcomed with songs of triumph by the
wives

wives and children of the band of villagers which has repulsed the invaders.

This popularity, however, was entirely confined to the inferior orders of ecclesiastics. The prejudice against the higher classes continued augmenting without interruption.

It was evident, from the conduct of the Court immediately before the meeting of the States-General, from the ceremonies observed on that occasion, and even from the discourse of M. Necker on the first day of the Assembly, that it was intended that a distinction of orders should be maintained, that the Assembly should vote by orders, and that each order should have the prerogative of putting a negative on the proceedings of the other two.

It is difficult to know what M. Necker's real sentiments were on this question. A fear of weakening his popularity might prevent his recommending the vote by orders ; unwillingness to disoblige the Court, and some dread

dread of the violence of certain leading men in the Tiers-Etat, might hinder him from recommending the voting by poll. He recommended neither entirely, and yet he recommended both in some degree. He said there were some points on which it was preferable to vote by order, and others on which it would be most expedient to vote by individual voices. What he said in favour of voting by orders was greatly applauded by the Nobles and Clergy. This was ill judged ; because it shewed the importance they put on that circumstance, and was an advertisement to the Tiers-Etat, had they needed it, to put an importance on it also.

In common sense, the stand which the Court, the Nobles, and Clergy, were making against voting by poll, and the dislike which M. Necker himself at last shewed to it, all came too late. Whatever opposition was intended ought to have been made against
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the Tiers-Etat having a double representation : after that was yielded, the opposition was much more difficult ; it was first agreeing to admit the lion, and then attempting to muzzle him*.

Yet notwithstanding the decisive step which the Tiers-Etat, with such of the Clergy as joined them, had taken on the 17th of June, the two higher orders continued their discussions in their respective chambers, and seemed still determined not to sanction the proceedings of the Third Order with their presence, which they imagined was abso-

* During the debates in the House of Commons in the reign of Charles II. on the Exclusion Bill, some members who spoke against excluding the Duke of York from the succession to the Crown acknowledged, however, that they ought to limit his power when he should come to the throne ; on which a member who was for the exclusion asked whether, if a lion was heard roaring in the lobby, it would be most prudent to admit him within the house and then muzzle him, or shut the door and exclude him ?

lutely necessary to render them legal in the eyes of the nation. They might have been convinced that this conjecture was erroneous, by the satisfaction and joy which was exhibited all over France, on account of the decided measures of the Tiers-Etat, and the declarations made to support them. The Parisians turned the refusal of the Nobles and Clergy into ridicule: many epigrams were made on the subject: a song was sung in the streets, and all Paris joined in the chorus, which consisted of the following lines:

Vive le Tiers-Etat de France !

Il aura la préponderance

Sur le Prince, sur le Prélat :

Ahi ! Povera Nobilita !

So sudden and so violent was the effect of this enthusiasm, and of the lampoons and libels which were scattered all over France against Nobility, that what had been formerly considered as the greatest advantage, and
without

without some pretensions to which, people were exposed to daily mortifications, was now almost looked on as a crime, and became in reality a misfortune. This want of candour was not confined to the populace, but reached many of the higher classes of the Bourgeoisie, who joined in the outcry of prejudice, and spoke of the Nobles as the most worthless of mankind, and the determined enemies of their country, for refusing to unite with the Third Order on the present occasion.

It has been already observed, that the Nobles and Clergy did not adopt the very best means for precluding or mitigating the attack with which they were threatened, and that their exertions to that purpose were not made at the proper time ; but it seems the height of injustice to blame them for attempting some resistance, and for not surrendering all their privileges at discretion.

To expect that those on whom distinc-

tions and privileges have devolved through a long series of ancestors will yield them up at the first call of public utility, even were it clearly proved that public utility made the demand, is to expect more than infinitely the greater part of mankind would be willing in a similar situation to grant. Those who, without making any sacrifice to the public good, abuse others for not making the greatest, are seldom possessed of even an ordinary share of generosity or public spirit; and there is little doubt but that many of the flaming patriots of the Third Order, those who declaimed the loudest on the justice of their requisitions, and against the obstinate arrogance of the Nobles, would, had they themselves been Noble, have declaimed with equal violence against the absurd pretensions of those whom in that case they would have called insolent roturiers: they would not only have called them so, but it is highly probable they would have

really

really *thought* all their requisitions unjust and unnatural. By contemplating political questions often in one point of view, men are very apt to be at last convinced that what is most favourable to their own private interest is also most for the interest of the public; and therefore there are not so many hypocrites, or men who speak and act contrary to the dictates of their understanding and conscience, in either party, as the violent partisans of each imagine.

If due weight were given to this remark, those men in every country of Europe who have viewed the French Revolution in opposite lights, would not reciprocally accuse one another in the unqualified manner they usually do.

The Nobles and dignified Clergy, who enjoy great privileges and rich benefices; those who possess ample sinecure places under a government, of whatever nature that government may be; the whole race of

bankers, to whom taxes are trifles ; and all government contractors, who grow rich as the State becomes poor, are peculiarly averse to any alteration in the present arrangement of things, and of course to them the French Revolution was an object of dread from the beginning. The oppression which the bulk of the French nation suffered from the nature of their ancient government, those men imagined would never reach their own country ; but the example given by the Revolution, and all the horrors which accompanied it, they thought, if not opposed, would spread over all Europe. This being their conviction, nobody can be surprised at their lamenting an event which they thought pregnant with such extensive mischief.

Those men, on the other hand, who consider freedom as the greatest of human blessings, who have a strong sense of the miseries that flow from despotism, who behold

hold with indignation the cruelty and arrogance with which dastardly power and unfeeling rank often treat the weak and the ingenious, men who, being acquainted with adversity, have a greater sympathy with the unfortunate than those above mentioned; men of this description beheld the beginning of the French Revolution with that complacency, which the expectation of seeing a large portion of their fellow creatures relieved from oppression naturally communicates. They saw its degeneracy with disappointment, grief, and horror; but were unwilling to lose the hope that some rational system of freedom, not the ancient tyranny, would arise out of that chaos of anarchy and bloodshed which it had produced: and they had no fear that the excesses committed by the most impetuous nation in Europe, on their being suddenly unchained, would be imitated by other nations, who were in

different circumstances and of opposite characters. This being their conviction, what candid mind can blame them more than the former? And of two classes of men, whose different manner of thinking on this subject seems in general to depend merely on the different situations in which they are placed, why should the one accuse the other of a design to involve their country in a scene of anarchy, bloodshed, and rapine, and the second condemn the first as the enemies of freedom and the friends of tyranny? Both those classes, in Great Britain at least, as I am persuaded, love their country and hate tyranny: but the one are more afraid of a mob than of a stretch of prerogative; and the other recollect that Wat Tyler and John Cade did not reign four months, whereas Henry VIII. reigned thirty-eight years, and James II. four.

During the sittings of the Notables M. de Mirabeau had published several pamphlets,

phlets, with a view to spirit up the public to insist on assembling the States-General. After the Deputies for that meeting began to meet at Versailles, he published a regular Journal, the avowed object of which was to give an account of the proceedings of the States-General. There were frequent insinuations against M. Necker in this paper, and some attempts to turn him into ridicule. It was universally read and pretty generally approved of by the popular party in other respects; yet it seemed to have small effect in injuring M. Necker in the public opinion. But having attacked some persons in the two privileged orders, it was suppressed by a decree of the Council on the 7th of May. The electors of the Tiers-Etat of Paris immediately met, and published what they called a reclamation against the decree of the Council; and Mirabeau continued his Journal under the new title of "Lettres du Comte de Mirabeau à ses Commettans,"

Commettans." From this an idea may be formed of the state of the King's authority even at this period. Mirabeau, who had not a high opinion of M. Necker's abilities, and who affected to despise them more than he did in reality, was exceedingly jealous of his popularity ; but, by continuing to vent his gall against him in his new publication, he injured his own more than that of the Minister, or, what perhaps is more precisely the truth, his wit and talent of ridicule were relished, notwithstanding their being sometimes improperly directed. Independent of the great stock of popularity with which M. Necker had formerly retired from office, he had acquired an immense accession from being universally considered as the author of the double representation which was so unexpectedly granted to the Tiers-Etat. This rendered him an object of adoration to one party, and of execration to the other. It must be confessed, that the

execrators have been the most persevering: the former having long since disappeared, the latter are to be found among the French emigrants all over Europe.

Had M. Necker been as judicious in the use of his popularity as he was assiduous in acquiring it, many people imagine, that some of the most intemperate measures of the Tiers-Etat would have been prevented, and the monarchy saved without liberty being lost.

Processes had been carried on in the criminal courts of Brittany against the authors of insurrections and other excesses which had taken place in that province. When it was thought that the guilty were about to be condemned and punished as they deserved, M. Necker prevailed on the Council to suspend the decisions of the courts, and thereby augmented the attachment of the populace to him. A little after the meeting of the States-General, several leading men
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belonging to the Tiers-Etat, who had a high opinion of the talents of M. Necker, and confidence in his integrity, gave him to understand, that they were disposed to be guided by him respecting their conduct in the Assembly. To every proposition or insinuation of this nature his answer was, “ that it was the duty of the King’s Minister to convoke the States-General, and conduct the Deputies to the door of the Assembly, but there he must leave them—to the guidance of their own understanding and the instructions of their constituents.”

This conduct was approved of by some people, as what all Ministers ought to imitate. Others gave him little credit for it, because they imagined it proceeded from his presuming, that the Tiers-Etat were disposed of themselves, without his securing any particular members, to adopt his views; or, if at any time a contrary disposition should appear, he thought he would have sufficient influence

influence to subdue it. Whatever M. Necker's motives for not listening to them were ; that such propositions were made to him by various Deputies who had considerable influence, and that he declined them, I am assured of on good authority.

But, independent of the Deputies above alluded to, M. Mirabeau himself, at this very period, notwithstanding all his jealousy of M. Necker, did not scruple to make advances to him, and to shew a disposition to co-operate with him in measures for allaying the fermentation which existed in the minds of the Commons, and threatened the ruin of the Monarchy. This we have on the authority of M. Malouet, a distinguished member of the Constituent Assembly, a man of integrity, and a friend to monarchy, but not that kind of monarchy which existed in France previous to the Revolution—a lover of liberty, but not that kind of liberty which
has

has taken place there since the 10th of August 1792.

Soon after the meeting of the States-General, during the disputes between the orders, M. Malouet drew up an address, well calculated to reconcile their differences, and which he proposed should be presented in the name of the Commons to the King. It was on the point of being adopted, when it was prevented by a manœuvre of Mirabeau, who, although he had been at one time well disposed to support the principles of M. Malouet's address, whispered to the Deputies nearest him, *Ceci est un message du Chateau**. This immediately was spread through the hall, and prevented the address from passing. Mirabeau intended this not so much against M. Malouet as against M. Necker and the Administration, to whom this address would have been of service.

* This comes from the Court.

He had been provoked to this by the following incident.

M. Malouet, whose moral character was very different from that of Mirabeau, had avoided any acquaintance with him, until M. du Roverai of Geneva, at the request of the latter, brought them together at his lodgings in Versailles, towards the end of May 1789. At this meeting Mirabeau addressed Malouet in the following terms: “ J’ai désiré une explication avec vous, parce qu’au travers de votre modération je vous reconnois ami de la liberté, et je suis peut-être plus effrayé que vous de la fermentation que je vois dans les esprits, et des malheurs qui peuvent en résulter. Je ne suis point homme à me vendre lâchement au despotisme; je veux une constitution libre, mais monarchique. Je ne veux point ébranler la monarchie; et si on ne se met de bonne heure en mesure, j’apperois dans notre assemblée de si mauvaises têtes, tant
d’inexpé-

d'inexpérience, d'exaltation, une résistance, une aigreur si inconfidérées, dans les deux premiers ordres, que je crains autant que vous d'horribles commotions. Vous êtes lié avec M. Necker et M. de Montmorin ; vous devez savoir ce qu'ils veulent, et s'ils ont un plan ; si ce plan est raisonnable, je le défendrai*."

* I wished to have some conversation with you, because, through all your moderation, I perceive that you are a friend to Liberty. I am perhaps more afraid of the fermentation that I see in men's minds, and what may be the consequence, than you are. I am not capable of basely selling myself to the cause of despotism ; I wish for a free constitution, but of a monarchical form. I have no desire to shake the monarchy. But I perceive so many wrong-headed persons in our Assembly, such inexperience, such exaltation, so acrimonious and inconsiderate an obstinacy in the two first orders, that I dread some horrible commotion as much as you possibly can. You are connected with M. Necker and M. de Montmorin ; you ought to know what their intentions are : if they have formed a plan, and if that plan is reasonable, I am willing to support it.

To this M. Malouet replied, that he had no certainty of the Ministers having formed any plan. “ Hé bien,” rejoined Mirabeau, “ voulez-vous leur proposer de me voir et de conférer avec moi* ?”

On mentioning this to M. Necker and M. de Montmorin, M. Malouet found both averse to any correspondence with Mirabeau. They talked of his moral character, &c. M. Malouet observed in answer to their objections, that a man of superlative talents, who, notwithstanding the immorality of his character, seemed to have reasonable political views, who was not decidedly fixed in any party, and who would add a great weight to whatever party he should attach himself, was worthy of some attention, and deserved to be listened to.

It was at last agreed, that M. Necker

* Well, will you propose to them to see me, that we may have a conference?—See Collection des Opinions de M. Malouet, tome troisieme, Paris 1792.

should receive Mirabeau the following morning. The meeting took place accordingly; the Minister's behaviour was cold in the highest degree. Mirabeau, observing this, reduced his to the same temperature: each imagined it was the duty of the other to break the ice; which neither condescending to do, their meeting was as ineffectual for the intended purpose, as that of two watermen brought to row in the same boat, who, on arriving at Whitehall Stairs, find the Thames frozen.

As Mirabeau retired, he said to M. Malouet, "I shall not make them another visit, but they shall hear of me." M. Malouet observes, that Mirabeau kept his word but too well; and the first opportunity he had of shewing his resentment was on the occasion above mentioned.

CHAPTER IX.

M. Necker forms a Plan of Government, which with little Alteration is approved of by the King and Council of State—Majority of the Clergy determine to join the Tiers-Etat—Proclamation for a Royal Session—The Tiers-Etat excluded from their Hall—Oath taken in the Tennis Court—The King's Declaration and Speeches—Marquis de Brézé—Mirabeau's Answer him—Decrees of the Assembly—The Timidity of the Council—The Causes of it.

IT is apparent that, from the first assembling of the States-General at Versailles to the time the Tiers-Etat declared themselves a National Assembly, M. Necker counted too much on his own importance, and imagined that it would be at any time

in his power to prevent their going into dangerous excesses. It must be confessed, that he at this period enjoyed a degree of influence at Court and popularity in the country that no Minister had ever before united. Without having the title of Prime Minister, he almost dictated all the decisions of the Cabinet :- for his advice was always adopted by the King ; the other members of the Administration had more the appearance of his clerks than of his colleagues, and found it absolutely necessary to be equally obsequious. His house was filled with Deputies from morning to night, and several who were considered as leading ones were of the number.

M. Necker's importance, from the time that he began to act a public part in France, had always depended either on the favour of the Monarch or on that of the People, or on both. The Nobles, the Clergy, and the Parliaments, were no way connected with
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it: none of these classes had ever shewn any partiality to M. Necker, and certainly he never shewed any partiality to them. It is most natural for men to impute an evil rather to something from which they themselves derive no benefit, than to that from which they derive the most flattering advantages. M. Necker might therefore be inclined to think, that the oppressions suffered by the French people, and the public misfortunes, proceeded infinitely more from the privileges enjoyed by the Nobles, the Clergy, and the Parliaments, than from the power of the Crown; and that the double representation granted to the Tiers-Etat would go more directly to control the former than the latter. He must also have known indeed, that the Nobles, the Clergy, and the Parliaments, formed the only checks to despotism that existed in the ancient government of France; but he might imagine that the new importance acquired by the

Tiers-Etat would render those checks unnecessary, and that he himself possessed the power of dictating to the latter—*thus far shalt thou go, and no farther*. But when he perceived the independent and triumphant manner in which the Third Order proceeded on the 17th of June, he began to fear that not only the privileged orders but the Crown itself, and that degree of authority which is necessary to give effect and energy to government, were in danger; and he imagined it was full time to pronounce his veto, and prevent the torrent of democracy from rolling any farther.

The Nobles, who had as little faith in M. Necker's abilities as they had love for his person, and persuaded that the torrent could be no more stopped by his influence than the waves were by the voice of Canute, were ready to sink into despair.

It was moved in their assembly, that, after inviting the Clergy to join them, they should
constitute

constitute themselves into an Upper House, in imitation of the British House of Peers. Whether it proceeded from prejudice against whatever is British, or that they were shocked at the idea of depreciating the pure metal of nobility with such a mass of ecclesiastical alloy, the proposal was heard with indignation and rejected with scorn. In an address to the King they justified their own conduct, and strongly accused the Tiers-Etat for their late usurpations, particularly for declaring all the taxes illegal.

M. Necker in the mean time composed a kind of plan of government, or declaration of rights, which he expected would moderate the fermentation, and conciliate the minds of the Commons, while it would also prove in some degree satisfactory to the other orders. In the system here traced out by M. Necker, many sources of complaint and oppression were removed; and on the whole it was well conceived, and might have

formed the basis of an excellent constitution. Had he advised the King and prevailed on him to have made the same proposal at the first meeting of the States-General, before the minds of the Deputies were heated by debate, and provoked by opposition, it would in all probability have been joyfully accepted. Such a sedate and steady step towards Liberty would have led to her attainment with much more certainty than all the furious strides and jumps, by which the French nation afterwards overshot her, and caught Licentiousness in her stead.

M. Necker presented his plan to the King, advising his Majesty to lay it before the States-General, at a royal session to be directly summoned for that purpose. The King, who had hitherto implicitly approved of M. Necker's proposals, summoned an extraordinary council on the present occasion, to examine the piece which the Minister had presented to him.

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The plan was in general approved of by this council. A very few alterations were made, and those, as I am assured, not very material; the most important being in the words, and not in the meaning or import of the articles.

There had long been different forms of expression used by the Council for the annulling of acts or judgments of courts of justice, or of municipalities. The most rigorous form was in the use of the word, *cassation*; the most moderate form consisted in the following terms: *sans s'arrêter à tel jugement que le Roi déclaroit comme non venu*—that is to say, the King orders the contrary, as if the act or judgment had never passed. In the plan delivered to the Council by M. Necker, he made use of the most moderate form in annulling the decrees of the Tiers-Etat of the 17th of June. The Council, to mark with the greater force the King's disapprobation of those decrees, used
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the most rigorous term, particularly in the third article, *Le Roi casse et annulle, comme anticonstitutionnelles, contraires aux lettres de convocation, et opposées à l'intérêt de l'Etat.* M. Necker certainly was in the right : provided the giant *be* destroyed, it is of no importance whether he dies by a stone from the sling of a stripling, or by the thunderbolt of Jupiter. Yet the King adhered to the alterations made by the Councils, which was unfortunate ; because by that means the form of declaration most likely to offend the Assembly was adopted ; and also because, however immaterial the difference between the two forms was, still that which was preferred could not be said to be the work of M. Necker, which alone would have secured it a more favourable reception.

On the 19th of June, the Assembly of the Clergy, who had been disputing for several days *where* they should verify their powers, decided by a small majority to join
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the National Assembly—which struck such an alarm into the Assembly of the Nobles, that one of them proposed to address the King to dissolve the States-General. This measure was not adopted: but the Court seem to have been as much alarmed as the Nobles; for a party of the guards were ordered to take possession of the hall on the morning of the 20th of June, when the junction was to have been, and at the same time a proclamation was made in the following terms:

“ De par le Roi. Le Roi ayant résolu de tenir une séance royale aux Etats-Généraux, Lundi 22 Juin, les préparatifs à faire dans les trois salles qui servent aux assemblées des ordres, exigent que les assemblées soient suspendues jusqu’après la tenue de ladite séance.”

When M. Bailly, the President of the Assembly, came to the gate of the hall, he was refused admittance, and then demanded to

ſpeak to the officer of the guard. The officer told him, that he had orders to permit no perſon whomſoever to enter the hall of the *States-General*. “ I proteſt againſt ſuch orders,” ſaid M. Bailly, “ and I will give an account of this to the *National Aſſembly*.”

The Deputies were at this time in various groups ſtanding before the gate. A rumour was ſpread, that the intention of the Court was to diſſolve the *States-General*. This occaſioned a clamour among the multitude which ſurrounded the groups of Deputies, every minute augmenting. “ Gentlemen,” ſaid M. Bailly addreſſing the Deputies, “ it is not a particular ſpace ſurrounded by walls which conſtitutes a *National Aſſembly*; we may aſſemble within or without, in the plains or in the mountains; wherever we meet, we equally are the *National Aſſembly*.”

“ Let us go forthwith to Marly,” ſaid
one

one of the Deputies, “ and hold a session on the terrace ; let the King himself take his place among us, and hear the language of liberty.”

But M. Bailly, having called the Secretaries of the Assembly to accompany him, went again to the gate of the hall, and required that all the papers belonging to the Assembly might be delivered to them. The officer immediately allowed them to enter, and to take the papers. The workmen had already removed all the benches, and were erecting a throne, and making other preparations for the royal session.

At this time it rained violently. Unwilling, however, to separate before they had come to some general resolution, the President invited the Deputies to accompany him to an adjacent tennis-court, where they might hold a meeting.

The various groups of Deputies then uniting into one body followed the Presi-

dent, and in the enthusiastic state of their minds it will readily be imagined, that the applause of the surrounding multitude was a full compensation for the inconveniencies they suffered from the rain : it is more than probable indeed, that the shower which was then at the height, by rendering the scene more affecting, and giving it the appearance of persecution, increased the enjoyment of many of the actors ; and although the rain was the only incident in those scenes which could not possibly be charged against the Court, yet it contributed more than all the rest to augment the indignation of the multitude, rendering the Court more odious and the Deputies more precious in their eyes, by fixing on them in some degree the character of martyrs in addition to that of patriots.

When they were convened in the tennis-court, M. Bailly read a letter to the Deputies, which he had received that morning, informing him, that the King had ordered
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the heralds to proclaim a royal session to be held on the 22d; and that the hall must of course be prepared for that purpose. He also communicated to them the answer which he had sent to the Marquis de Brézé, the Master of the Ceremonies, and which was in these words: “ N’ayant pas encore reçu d’ordres du Roi, Monsieur, et l’Assemblée étant annoncée pour huit heures, je me rendrai où mon devoir m’appelle*.”

The President, no doubt, intended that it should be understood from this answer, that he would take nothing as an order from the King, which did not come directly from his Majesty to him without the intervention of a third person.

M. Bailly had scarcely finished reading the answer he had sent to the Marquis de

* Having received no particular order from the King, Sir, and the Assembly having been appointed to meet at eight o’clock, I shall go where my duty calls me.

Brézé,

Brézé, when he received another letter from the same gentleman, declaring that it was by the *positive orders of the King* he had sent him word, that as a royal session was to be held on the 22d, which required preparations in the three halls of the three different orders, it was his Majesty's pleasure that there should be no meeting of the Deputies until then; and that he had given orders, that no person should be admitted into the hall.

This excited fresh indignation and some threats against the Márquis de Brézé. It was the universal opinion of the Deputies, that there was an intention to dissolve the Assembly of the States-General.

M. Bailly, having exhorted them to calmness, desired their opinions with respect to the proper measures to be adopted in the present emergency. M. Target, M. Barnave, and others, made discourses, the tendency of which was to increase a heat,
which

which of itself was every moment augmenting. At length M. Mounier, a man of moderation, whose views were directed to a reform of government consistent with the preservation of the monarchy, proposed an oath to be taken on the spot by the Deputies, never to part until the important objects for which they had been chosen by their constituents were attained, and the Constitution was completed. This motion having been universally approved, M. Bailly in the most solemn manner pronounced the words of the oath, to which all the Deputies, joining hands, announced their adherence by an affirmative acclamation, which was followed by the shouts of the spectators, who, in the fervour of enthusiasm, poured many blessings on the Deputies as the saviours of their country. M. Necker was at this time absent from Versailles, attending a dying relation, and entirely escaped the

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odium in which the Court and other Ministers were involved.

The following day the Court returned from Marly to Versailles, and a rumour spread that the King had abandoned the measure of holding a royal session. The joy which this news occasioned at Paris is a sufficient evidence, that something pernicious was expected from that measure. It was not abandoned, however, but only postponed for one day, and instead of the 22d the 23d was announced by proclamation as the day on which it was to be held; and, that M. Bailly might have no reason to complain of not being made acquainted with the King's pleasure by a direct message from his Majesty, a letter was sent to him in these words:

“ Je vous prévien, Monsieur, que la séance que j'ai indiquée pour demain, Lundi, n'aura lieu que Mardi à dix heures du matin,

tin, et que la salle ne fera ouverte que pour ce moment. Signé, LOUIS*.”

The Marquis of Brézé, who transmitted this note from the King to M. Bailly, requested at the same time, that the latter would acknowledge the receipt of it—which the President did in the following laconic terms :

“ J’ai reçu, Monsieur, la lettre du Roi, qui m’est adressée, et que sa Majesté vous a chargé de me faire tenir. J’ai l’honneur d’être, &c.†”

In advising the King to address his letter directly to M. Bailly, in consequence of the hint given in his former note to the Mar-

* I premonish you, Sir, that the session which I intended for to-morrow, Monday, will not take place till Tuesday at ten o’clock, and that the hall will not be open till then. Signed, LOUIS.

† I have received, Sir, the King’s letter which was addressed to me, and which his Majesty ordered you to transmit to me. I have the honour to be, &c.

quis de Brézé, there appears a degree of condescension which does not at all accord with the lofty measures of the Court on the 20th, and seems to indicate a disposition to relinquish them. It was evident, however, from the King's note, that his Majesty expected that no attempt should be made to assemble the Deputies in the common hall, or elsewhere, before they met at the royal session. This did not prevent M. Bailly and the Deputies from going to the tennis-court, with a view to hold their Assembly and unite with the Clergy ; but they found it so much crowded with the people who were desirous of being witnesses to that ceremony, that they retired in search of a more commodious place, and first applied to the Monks of the Convent of Recolets for the use of their church. Those fathers represented, that as they depended on the bounty of the King for their maintenance, they begged that their church might not be made
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use of for a purpose which their benefactor disapproved. From the Recolets M. Bailly and the Deputies repaired again to the gate of their own hall, and were again refused admission by the guards. As they must have foreseen that this would be the case, the second attempt could only be intended to augment the rage of the people against those who treated their representatives with such indignity, and forced them to wander from place to place for shelter, and in search of a hall to assemble in. What renders this conjecture the more probable is, that the instant the officer of the guards refused them admittance, the President and all the Deputies betook themselves to the church of Saint-Louis; into which having entered without difficulty, the oath taken at the tennis-court was administered to those Deputies who had not been present on that occasion. While they were employed in this manner, and in settling some other

ceremonials, the majority of the Clergy were assembling in the choir. When all were adjusted, the Clergy, with several Bishops at their head, joined them. The doors of the choir were thrown open. The Deputies of the Tiers-Etat received their new associates with open arms, and the vault of the church resounded with the acclamations of the spectators. The Clergy took their seats on the right hand of the President. The Marquis of Blaeon and the Comte Antoine d'Agoult, Deputies from the province of Dauphiny, attended on this occasion, and had their powers verified. They said that they were prompted to this step, without waiting for the rest of the order to which they belonged, by their consciences and by love for their country. They were the only Deputies of the order of Noblesse who joined the Tiers-Etat previous to the royal session.

On the 23d of June, all the streets of Versailles leading to the hall of the Assembly

bly were filled with detachments from the French and the Swiss guards, while parties of the Marechaussée patrolled around the hall, and through all the streets, with orders to disperse crowds or groups, wherever they were observed to be forming.

By the proclamation the Deputies were directed to attend at ten in the morning; but, according to the ceremonial which was observed, the Clergy were admitted first, and placed at the right hand of the throne prepared for the King. The Nobles were introduced next, and seated on the left. This took up a considerable space of time, during which the Deputies of the Third Order were obliged to seek shelter from the rain in an old wooden house near the hall, and on the great avenue.

As the two privileged orders were not placed so soon as was expected, it was imagined that the time was prolonged unnecessarily. M. Bailly had some sharp alterca-

tion with the Marquis de Brézé on that account ; but the Tiers-Etat were at last admitted, and placed themselves below the two other orders on each side, and at the end of the hall opposite to the throne.

The King having left the palace as soon as the Deputies were placed, arrived with a pompous retinue, and seated himself on the throne a little after eleven. He was surrounded by the Princes of the blood, the Dukes and Peers, and certain officers of the household ; four heralds, with their king at arms, stood in the middle of the hall ; and the Ministers were seated around a table immediately before the throne. But one chair was vacant : M. Necker was still in attendance on his sick relation. Some think that he sacrificed public duty a little too much to private feeling on this occasion ; others accuse him of having absented himself from pique, because the memorial and plan which he had drawn up was not *literally* adopted

adopted by the Council and approved by the King. But, whatever was the cause, his absence had an ill effect; it gave the public an impression that he did not approve of the measures of the Court, and it rendered the Deputies suspicious even of those parts of the King's declaration which were the most agreeable to their own principles. This jealousy and distrust threw a gloom over the meeting, which was augmented by the accident of one of the King's secretaries dying of an apoplexy in the middle of the hall.

The King having pronounced an introductory discourse, the Declaration or Plan of a new Constitution and System of Government was read. By this the proceedings of the National Assembly were annulled; the liberty of the press was recommended, but with such restrictions as might have had a tendency to render it of little utility. A desire to secure personal freedom was expressed;

pressed; but the Assembly were invited to reconcile the abolition of lettres de cachet, so universally wished for, with the safety of the government, the power of repressing the first symptoms of sedition, and *securing the honour of private families* *.

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* The last article may seem extraordinary to British subjects, who will naturally think, that the honour of private families would have a greater chance of being injured than protected by lettres de cachet. But, during the ancient government, when any person of a noble family was condemned by law to be publicly executed, all their relations, whether they had any regard for the condemned person, or any belief of his innocence or not, used their interest to prevent his execution—because, from an old prejudice stronger in France than in any other country, a public execution was considered as dishonouring the whole family. When the case, therefore, was thought too atrocious to give hopes of obtaining a full pardon, the relations made interest for a lettre de cachet, to shut up the criminal for life. This is probably what is alluded to in the King's declaration, by the expression of *securing the honour of private families*. Yet no maxim was more admired or oftener
quoted

On the other hand, the King was by this plan bound from establishing any new tax without the consent of the representatives of the nation. No privilege or distinction of orders was to prevent the equal payment of taxes. The Corvée, so oppressive on the peasantry, was to be entirely abolished. The distinction of orders was to be preserved; but the Deputies were to assemble and debate in common, and the public representation was to be sacred from the encroachments of the Crown. Many other salutary plans of reform were recom-

quoted by the French, than the fine expression of one of their own poets,

Le crime fait la honte, et non pas l'ecchaffaud.

This prejudice was removed by the Constitution, which was accepted by the King on the 14th of September 1791; and most fortunate it is for private families that this precaution was thought of, otherwise there are very few private families in France who would not at present be considered as dishonoured.

mended;

mended ; the whole manifesting such a disposition to meet the wishes of the people as merited a return of gratitude, and formed a foundation upon which a happy and permanent structure of free government might have been built.

Of all the articles in the King's declaration, perhaps the most unpopular and offensive was that prohibiting any person except the Deputies themselves from being present at their deliberations, whether they were held in common or in the chambers of the respective orders ; yet none could be more necessary for the maintenance of order, decency, the freedom of debate, and for the public weal.

That all the concessions which the King seemed willing to make to the wishes of the nation were not received by the Deputies of the Tiers-Etat with satisfaction, seems to have been owing, 1st, To their having been delayed until the majority of the Clergy had

united with them, which it was firmly believed would be soon followed by that of a great part of the Nobles. 2d, To some of them having been delivered in terms too dictatorial, it was said that those who wished well to the cause of freedom would not adopt the language of despotism ; the maxim, *suaviter in modo et fortiter in re*, was never more necessary and never less observed than on this occasion. 3d, To M. Necker's having rejected the advances made to him by Mirabeau ; for, had the latter been on a good understanding and co-operated with the former, there can be little doubt but their conjoint influence would have prevailed on the Tiers to have been satisfied with the plan as it was, or with a few alterations. 4th, The absence of M. Necker from the ceremony of the royal session, which convinced the people and the Deputies that he did not approve of the plan of government, and rendered them distrustful of the intentions of the Court. 5th, The ill humour into which the Deputies

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ties of the Third Order were thrown, by the sudden shutting up of their hall, and by the marks of neglect or contempt which were shewn to them on various occasions between that period and the royal sessions. 6th, The numerous military detachments that patrolled through the streets of Versailles, and around the hall of the Assembly, on the day of that session. At a time when so many incidents concurred to fill the minds of the people with prejudice against the Noblesse, diffidence of the Court, and an enthusiastic veneration for the Deputies of the Third Order; when the Deputies themselves had caught fresh enthusiasm from that of the people, and fresh courage from a view of the support they had; nothing could be worse judged than the ostentatious procession of the Court from the palace to the hall, the embroidered heralds and numerous guards, as likewise the unusual display of pompous carriages and gaudy liveries of the Noblesse;

Noblesse ; while the Deputies of the Tiers-Etat, who in fact had the power of the state in their hands, were huddled together under the shade of an old house, until those who were thought worthy of attention being commodiously seated, they at last were allowed to enter and stand like a mob at the bottom of the hall. Pompous ceremonies and processions, when the minds of the spectators are averse to the occasion of them and alienated from the performers, instead of veneration excite disgust or contempt. It is performing high mass with Romish splendour before a congregation of presbyterians.

After the declaration was read, no mark of approbation or discontent, except that of profound silence, was given. The King then rose, and addressing the Assembly once more said, “ Vous venez, Messieurs, d’entendre le résultat de mes dispositions, et de mes vues ; elles sont conformes au vif desir

que j'ai d'opérer le bien public ; et si par une fatalité loin de ma pensée vous m'abandonniez dans une si belle entreprise, seul, je ferai le bien de mes peuples, &c. &c.

“ Réfléchissez, Messieurs, qu'aucun de vos projets ne peut avoir force de loi sans mon approbation spéciale. Ainsi je suis le garant naturel de vos droits respectifs, et tous les Ordres de l'Etat peuvent se reposer sur mon équitable impartialité. Toute défiance de votre part seroit une grande injustice. C'est moi jusqu'à présent qui fais tout pour le bonheur de mes peuples ; et il est rare, peut-être, que l'unique ambition d'un souverain soit d'obtenir de ses sujets qu'ils s'entendent enfin pour accepter ses bienfaits.”

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* You have heard, gentlemen, the result of my intentions or views ; they are conformable to the lively desire I have for the public good ; and if you, by some fatality far from my thoughts, should abandon me in so praiseworthy an enterprise—I alone will accomplish the happiness of my subjects, &c.

Recollect,

He concluded by ordering them to separate directly, and to assemble the following day, each in the chamber appropriated to the order to which he belonged.

If it were not known, that no part of the speeches pronounced by the King on this occasion, nor of the declaration read in his name, were of his composition, the self-sufficiency and loftiness of this speech are so contrary to the natural diffidence of his character, that it would be quite apparent that this at least could not be his. It is certainly

Recollect, gentlemen, that none of your projects can have the force of law without my particular approbation. Thus I am the natural guarantee of your respective rights, and all the orders of the State may rely upon my justice and impartiality—all diffidence on your part would be doing me great injustice: it is I who have hitherto done all for the good of my people; and it is perhaps a little singular, that the sole ambition of a Sovereign should be to prevail on his subjects to agree with each other, that they may receive his favours to the greater advantage.

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not unusual for Ministers to regale the Sovereigns, in whose service they are, with occasional treats of panegyric ; but they generally contrive to have them pronounced by some other orator than the Sovereign himself ; and the Ministers of Lewis XVI. were blameable for having deviated from the established custom in the present instance ; but they were still more blameable for placing their master in the awkward situation of giving commands, without having secured the means of enforcing obedience.

As soon as the King had pronounced this peremptory order, he retired, and was followed by the Nobility and the majority of the Clergy. The Deputies of the Commons remained. They seemed indignant, but not intimidated. As a hint to them to withdraw, workmen were sent into the hall to remove the throne and the benches near it. More respectful than those who sent them, the workmen suspended their labour, on perceiving

perceiving that the Deputies did not retire. When their perseverance was known at the Court, M. de Brézé, an officer, was sent to remind them of the King's orders. To this admonition M. Bailly, the President, replied, that the National Assembly received orders from no person. An interval of silence followed, during which it was doubtful whether all the Deputies approved the President's answer or not. Mirabeau seizing the critical moment exclaimed, " Nous avons entendu les intentions qu'on a suggérées au Roi"; and then, addressing the officer of the court, continued, " et vous qui ne sauriez être son organe auprès des Etats Généraux, vous qui n'avez ici ni place, ni voix, ni droit de parler, vous n'êtes pas fait pour nous rappeler son discours ; allez dire à ceux qui vous envoient que nous sommes ici par la volonté du Peuple, et qu'on ne nous en arrachera que par la puissance des bayonnettes*."

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* Yes, we have heard what the King has been prevailed

The immediate effect of this speech of Mirabeau was, that the Deputies, by a general acclamation, announced their assent to what he had pronounced. The President then addressing himself to M. de Brézé said, "The Assembly decreed yesterday, that they would continue their meeting after the royal session; I can make no alteration in this decree."—"Shall I carry that answer to the King?" said M. de Brézé. "Yes, Sir," rejoined the President.

When De Brézé was withdrawn, Mirabeau proposed, that the persons of the Deputies should be declared inviolable, and that whoever should make any attempt against their liberty should be deemed traitors to

on to express. But you, who cannot be his organ in this assembly; you, who have here neither seat nor vote, nor any right whatever, are not the proper person to remind us of his discourse. Go and tell those who sent you, that we are here assembled by the will of the French people, and nothing will make us retire but the bayonet.

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the country, and guilty of a capital crime ; which passed into a decree immediately. The Abbé Sieyes made an harangue, the tendency of which was to encourage them to adhere to their purpose of re-establishing the nation in its rights, and forming a free constitution, which no power on earth, he said, had a right to do for them ; and he used an expression, which was admired at the time, and has been often quoted since : “ Do you not feel, gentlemen, that you are to-day what you were yesterday ? ” He finished his speech by moving, that their Assemblies should be public. No authority, he added, should prevail on them to exclude the People from hearing their debates. This also was agreed to, and the Assembly soon after broke up.

When M. le Marquis de Brézé made his report to the Council of the manner in which the King's orders had been obeyed, they seemed in a greater dilemma and much

more alarmed than the Assembly had been when they heard them delivered*.

As there were four thousand guards under arms on the day of the royal session, and seven or eight regiments in the neighbourhood of Versailles, the passive timidity of the Council may seem extraordinary. The following circumstances are said to have made a strong impression, and to have contributed to an alteration in their measures.

* Those who suggested these peremptory orders given by the King on the present occasion, seem to have acted on the same principle with Bays in the Duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal—who, to make sure of the success of his piece, said, that he would appear on the stage in mourning, attended by an executioner, and roundly tell the audience, that if they did not immediately applaud his play, he would order the executioner to cut off his head before their faces; on which, adds he, they will all applaud. But on its being suggested, that possibly the audience might not applaud, Bays had thought of no subterfuge, by which he might avoid the other alternative.

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At the ceremony in the tennis-court on the 20th, several of the guards had appeared greatly affected; and it was believed, that none but the foreign troops would have obeyed, if any violence had been ordered to be used to the Deputies. When the King returned from the Assembly to the palace on the 23d, although the streets were crowded with people, they maintained a fullen silence. No sign of applause, not so much as a single *Vive le Roi!* was heard—an event without a precedent in the annals of the French monarchy; for the French populace hitherto had been as much accustomed to applaud their King, whatever his character was, as often as he appeared in public, as the ancient Egyptians were to worship whatever the Priests presented to them, whether in the form of a crocodile or a calf.

CHAPTER X.

Great Popularity of M. Necker—Disorders in Paris—Part of the Order of Nobles join the National Assembly—Reflections on that Event—Populace demand to be admitted, contrary to the King's Orders—Deputation to the King on that Subject—The King desires the Nobles and Clergy to unite with the Tiers-Etat—Debates on that Subject—The two superior Orders join the National Assembly—Universal Joy—Discourse of Mirabeau—Reflections.

GREAT numbers of the Deputies, after the breaking up of the Assembly, went directly to M. Necker's hotel ; but he, on the pretext of being indisposed, saw very few of them. It was soon after rumoured, that the King was displeased with the Mini-

ster, because he had not attended the royal session, and that he was to be dismissed from the Administration. In the evening, however, he went to wait on his Majesty. This was no sooner known, and it was known immediately, than the courts of the palace were crowded with the populace, who from time to time exclaimed, *Vive M. Necker ! Point de demission !* but no cry of *Vive le Roi !* was heard.

After his conference with the King, as M. Necker returned to his own house, the multitude surrounding him insisted on his giving his promise not to resign his situation. This they obtained without much difficulty. The assurance was heard with transport ; those nearest him held him up in their arms to gratify their fellow citizens with a sight of this favourite Minister, and then actually carried him in this triumphant manner to his hotel.

The Nobles, and the minority of the
Clergy

Clergy who had not united with the Tiers-Etat, met the day after the royal session in their respective chambers, as the King had enjoined ; but the other Deputies, still retaining the name of the National Assembly, met in the old hall, and deliberated as a complete legislative body. Nothing can be a stronger proof how much all the King's injunctions were disregarded, than that on this first meeting, although he had ordered that none but Deputies should be admitted to hear their debates, a great number of strangers were present. The sentries at the door asked of each person that presented himself, if he was a Deputy ; but if by his hesitation there was reason to suspect that he was not, the sentry whispered to him, *Say yes*, and immediately desired him to enter.

While the disputes concerning the union of the orders existed at Versailles, the minds of the Parisians were in continual agitation. Messengers were dispatched several times
a-day

a day from Versailles, to inform the groups and bands of politicians in the Palais Royal, of what passed at the Assembly ; and, if any one ventured to utter an expression contrary to the prevailing opinion, he was exposed to the capricious insults of the multitude.

They obliged one person to make what they called *amende honorable*, by asking pardon on his knees and kissing the ground ; others they punished with the rod ; and one unfortunate ecclesiastic they treated so rudely, by shoving him from one side to the other of the circle which surrounded him, that he was long confined to his bed, and with difficulty escaped with his life from the consequences of this barbarous sport.

One wretch, who had a diabolical rancour against M. d'Espremenil, seized the moment when a bulletin just brought from Versailles was read to a group in one of the public places, accusing him as an apostate
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from the cause of the people, and made a most violent harangue against that gentleman, which he concluded by a proposal; that, as his person was not immediately in their power, they should turn his wife and children into the street, and burn his house. A person of presence of mind and humanity, who heard this shocking proposal, and was afraid that some of the most furious might adopt it, exclaimed, “ that it would be no punishment to the real criminal, because the house and furniture belonged to the landlord, his wife to the public ; and that as for the children, they perhaps belonged to some of the best patriots in the company.”

This sarcasm against M. d’Espremenil was believed neither by the speaker nor the audience ; but as it put them in a humour inconsistent with the horrid proposal, which certainly was the intention of the speaker, it may be considered as a very happy jest.

Besides the moveable groups which were
constantly

constantly forming and dissolving in the Palais Royal, a band of young men formed themselves into a society, erected a scaffold sheltered from rain, in a form of a kind of hall, and, in imitation of the Assembly at Versailles, chose a President and Secretaries, and debated on political questions. Here the most incendiary motions were made, and the most extravagant and ridiculous accusations against the Ministers and persons of distinction of both sexes belonging to the Court. Those accusations for being ridiculous were not the less dangerous ; as they exposed the objects of them to the insults and fury of the mob. At the conclusion of each debate, there was a decree or sentence, expressive of the opinion of the society, immediately drawn up and announced to the multitude. After a long debate respecting M. d'Espremenil, who, from being esteemed as a patriot, was now detested as a courtier, the sentence of this society

society was, that his name should be erased from the list of Counsellors of the Parliament, and he himself declared a traitor to his country.

L'Abbé Maury by the same authority was to be placed on a pillory on the Pont-neuf, there to remain during the sitting of the States-General.

A third sentence was, that all persons of the name of Polignac should be transported to the poorest part of the province of Auvergne, that it might be fertilized by their riches. This was directed against Madame de Polignac, the Queen's favourite, who was supposed to have enriched herself and many of her relations at the expence of the national treasure.

What was burlesque or humourous in these mock decrees made them a source of mirth, till their consequences became not only serious but horrible. Perhaps it is characteristic of the French more than of
any

any other nation, to blend sentiments of gaiety with those of atrocity, although every idea belonging to the latter ought to exclude all tendency to the former. Instances of this unnatural mixture are not unfrequent in the writings of Voltaire; and many shocking proofs of it occur in the course of the French Revolution.

To quiet the minds of the Parisians, and prevent disorder, M. Necker wrote a letter to M. de Crofne, lieutenant of police, giving assurance that the King had no intention of dissolving the States-General. Indeed it was now apparent, both at Versailles and at Paris, that they would be dissolved in no other way than by being all united with the Tiers-Etat, under the common name of the National Assembly. This was known to be the wish of the Duke of Orleans, and generally imagined, in him, to proceed from childish and ungenerous motives; but there were members of the body of Nobles, who,
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notwithstanding the privileges which they themselves enjoyed, beheld with painful sensibility the sufferings of the large mass of their countrymen, under the manifold abuses of the ancient government. Their object was the reformation of abuses and acquisition of freedom, by the establishment of a government, in which the monarch as well as the people would be gainers ; because the power of doing wrong, and of becoming corrupt and unhappy, would be limited on his part, and the necessity of crouching under oppression and insult would be removed on theirs ; because he would acquire subjects whose love would do him honour, instead of slaves whose applause was a proof of nothing but their own debasement. But that portion of the Nobles who thought in this manner, also thought, that their object was not to be attained without abandoning on the present emergency the class to which they belonged, which they saw attached to
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the old system, and joining the Tiers-Etat.

A gentleman of this country, who with a most comprehensive natural understanding possesses a great store of useful and ornamental literature—not like those who possess that kind of property, as if it were all in land or on mortgage, which cannot always be turned to immediate use, but like one who has the value of a large estate all in sterling gold at his command, on every private or public occasion—this gentleman observes, that “turbulent, discontented men of quality, in proportion as they are puffed up with personal pride and arrogance, generally despise their own order: one of the first symptoms they discover of a selfish and mischievous ambition, is a profligate disregard of a dignity which they partake with others. To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in

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society,

society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections; it is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country and to mankind. The interests of that portion of social arrangement are a trust in the hands of all those who compose it; and as none but bad men would justify it in abuse, none but traitors would barter it away for their own personal advantage."

These observations are in some respects as just as they are ingenious. Unquestionably an attachment to the little platoon to which a man accidentally belongs, is a step towards general benevolence beyond mere selfishness; but it is a step which many people take without advancing farther. In defending the privileges and claims of the particular class to which a man belongs, he may only think of his own interest; and there are instances of men who have distinguished themselves

themselves by that kind of zeal, without any good will to one individual of the profession or class to which they belonged.

It is an indisputable truth, that none but traitors would barter away, for their own particular interest, any of the general privileges of that class of society to which they belong; but it is equally true, that the man who is willing to join in a general sacrifice of privileges or claims which have been long attached to the class or profession to which he belongs, but which he thinks unjust in themselves, and contrary to the good of society in general, acts a nobler part than the man who at all events supports and defends them. And, upon the whole, I am apt to think that more evil has accrued to mankind from their unjust partiality to the division or particular class to which they belong, than from their sacrificing its interest from any reason whatever.

Has not the fellow-feeling, which exists

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through

through all the branches of law and phyfic, been long felt and complained of as the source of many abuses by which the public suffers? Has not the *esprit de corps* which reigns among the Clergy afforded protection to much imposture, and produced much partiality to some and much persecution of others, particularly in Roman Catholic countries, where the power of the Clergy is greater, and where there are fewer and less affectionate bonds of relation between them and the laity?

On the 24th of June it was proposed in the Assembly of the Nobles, that they should unite with the Commons; and the propriety of this measure was ably maintained by some members, equally distinguished for their talents and integrity; and on the 25th forty-seven Nobles, at the head of whom was the Duke of Orleans, actually went and incorporated themselves with the National Assembly. Having mentioned

tioned the leader, it is necessary, in justice to this band of Nobility, to add, that the Duke of Rochefoucault, the Counts Lally Tolendal, Clermont-Tonnerre, and other men of unblemished character, were also of the number.

They were attended through the streets with the applauding acclamations of the people, and received with joy by the National Assembly ; but the crowd which had accompanied them to the hall of the Assembly insisted on entering and being witnesses to the happy union of the orders. When the request of the multitude was announced, it produced a demur, because of the King's express order that the people should not be present at their debates ; for although the sentries allowed those to enter, who, from the decency of their appearance, might pass for Deputies, they still kept out the mere mob. A debate therefore ensued on this question, Whether they should attend

to the King's command, or to the requisition of the mob. The reader will perhaps be surprised, that any debate should arise on such a subject; but he cannot be more surprised than M. Barnave seems to have been. He began his speech in these words: " Il est étrange et surprenant que l'on veuille défendre à la Nation l'entrée de la salle nationale*!" Although he continued to speak with great energy, there was reason to fear, from the noise at the door, that the people would not trust their cause to the strength of his arguments, but were on the point of using more forcible means; on which M. Bailly, the Archbishop of Vienne, and the Count Clermont-Tonnerre, went to assure them that the Assembly would send a deputation of their members to the King, to request a free entrance for them into the

* It is strange and surprising, that the Nation should be refused admittance into the National Assembly!

hall,

hall, and that in all probability the doors would be thrown open on the following day. This satisfied the people; and the deputation was immediately appointed, and consisted of six Ecclesiastics, six Nobles, and twelve of the Third Order. This was putting the King to the disagreeable alternative of either increasing the discontent of the people, or recalling the order he had given. It was not difficult to foresee the consequence.

The majority of the Nobles, however, and the minority of the Clergy who had not united with the Tiers-Etat, continued to meet in their respective halls. The only question they had to discuss was, Whether they should join their brethren, or continue to form chambers apart? In the chamber of the Nobles it was decided, that they should at all events remain separate; in that of the Clergy the same measure was

carried, but in a less determined manner—some principal members seceded on the 26th. In the mean time the King was in the most cruel perplexity; frequent Councils were held, and nothing was decided. In a private conversation which he had with the Duke of Luxembourg, it is said, that the King first expressed a desire for the union of the orders. The Duke represented, that this step would be more injurious to the Crown than to the Nobles; that, by uniting in one Assembly with the Third Order, the Noblesse, from their rank, the respect due to their families, and their wealth, would retain a considerable share of importance in the State; but that the Crown had every thing to dread from the union, and therefore that his faithful Nobles were determined to resist to the last, and die in defence of the monarchy. The King, who had a dislike to violent measures, and sickened at

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the idea of bloodshed, answered, “ Je ne veux pas qu’il perisse un seul homme pour ma querelle.”

It would be a curious, though painful, subject of calculation, to endeavour to ascertain how many of the human race, who have been cut off since that period, would be now alive, had all the Sovereign Princes in Europe been of the same way of thinking in this point with the unfortunate Lewis XVI. All the conquests which the most successful of them have made, and all the laurels which their Generals have obtained, will hardly be thought a compensation for so many hundred thousand lives as by the lowest computation have been lost by the war, in the interval between June 1789 and this present December 1794.

On the 27th the King sent a letter to the Duke of Luxembourg, who was President of the order of Nobles, then assembled in their own particular hall. The letter was of the
same

same import with what his Majesty had expressed the preceding night, and requested that the Nobles should, without any farther delay, unite with the two other orders in their common hall, that they might accomplish the *paternal objects* he had in view.

The King's letter having been read, the question was stated, Whether they should unite, in conformity to the King's desire, or not? The majority seemed to be for the affirmative; but a considerable number were of the opposite opinion. It was asserted, that it was their duty to endeavour to save the King in spite of himself. Some proposed, that they should bind themselves by a solemn oath never to yield up their privilege as Nobles, by uniting with the Tiers-Etat in a common Assembly.

The Viscount de Mirabeau, whose political opinions were the reverse of his brother's, had not patience to wait for the decision of the Assembly on this motion, but instantly
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swore that, for his own part, he would not leave the chamber until they had come to a resolution never to disgrace themselves by an union with the Third Order. Notwithstanding this particular oath on the part of the Viscount, the motion for the general one was rejected; on which it was evident, that the junction would be carried; and therefore several protests, very strongly expressed, were taken by those who opposed it. In the midst of this contest, a letter was delivered to the President. It was from the Count d'Artois, assuring the Duke that a longer resistance would put the King's life in danger*.

When this was communicated to the Assembly, M. de Cazales, a courageous friend

* The Count d'Artois had long been unpopular; and, in some people's opinion, if an insurrection had happened, the Count's life would have been in more danger than the King's.

of Monarchy, who imagined he saw its ruin in the union of the orders, said, “ If either the King or the Monarchy must perish, our first duty is to save the Monarchy ; and, if the King is in danger, let us go and form a rampart with our bodies for his defence.”

The Duke of Luxembourg, however, observed, that there was not time to deliberate longer ; it was now their duty to unite, and afterwards endeavour to save both. It was then agreed, that they should go directly and unite themselves with the National Assembly ; and, that the Viscount de Mirabeau might not be under the necessity of remaining in the chamber all the remainder of his life, the President told him that he released him from his oath—which of course quieted the alarmed conscience of the Viscount.

The Cardinal de Rochefoucault received a letter from the King at the same time and to the same purpose with that sent to the Duke of Luxembourg. When the Cardinal
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had communicated its contents to the minority of the Clergy who remained in the hall of their order, they agreed without a debate to obey the will of the King.

At about four in the afternoon it was understood in the National Assembly, that the two privileged orders were coming to join them. If the Noblesse and Clergy had displayed an imprudent and invidious magnificence at the first assembling of the States-General, they avoided that error in the ceremony of uniting with the Third Order. However applauded the union was by the Nation at large, it was performed by the Nobles without ostentation, and by the Clergy with Christian humility. They chose a time when very few members were in the hall; the President himself was absent; he was immediately sent for, and arrived in time to receive the Clergy and Nobles. They entered at the same time at

two

two different doors, the Clergy at the right, and the Nobles at the left, and walked to their places in two parallel lines. The Cardinal de Rochefoucault as President of the Clergy, addressing M. Bailly, said, “ We are conducted hither by our love and respect for the King, by our regard for our country, and our zeal for the public weal.”

The Duke of Luxembourg, on the part of the Nobility, said, “ Gentlemen, the order of Nobles have this day decreed to meet at this national hall, that they may give to the King a proof of their respect, and to the Nation a proof of their patriotism.”

M. Bailly, the President of the Assembly, declared that he could not find words to express the joy he felt on this happy union of all the branches of the national family ; that by the junction of the Clergy and Nobility with the Third Order, the prosperity of
their

their common country was secured, and that day would be for ever celebrated as a festival in France.

As soon as it was known that the union of the orders had taken place at the desire of the King, the inhabitants of Versailles, transported with joy, ran in crowds to the palace. The guards, alarmed at their number and the violence of their emotion, were preparing to resist their entrance, when hearing the cry of *Vive le Roi!* the gates were thrown open, and the extensive courts of the castle were immediately filled with a multitude of people of both sexes and all conditions, who begged to be gratified with a sight of the King. The Monarch soon appeared at the balcony with the Queen at his side: both were received with applause, and nothing was heard but expressions of gratitude and admiration.

As M. Necker had been absent from the royal session, and had been often with the
King

King and a close attendant on the Council at the time when the resolution was taken, on the part of the King, to propose the union of the orders, the merit of this was imputed to him. As often as he appeared in the streets of Versailles, he was surrounded by applauding crowds, who exacted of him to renew the assurance that he had no intention to resign; which when he gave them, the cry of *Vive le Roi!* was joined to that of *Vive M. Necker!* which they had been exclaiming from the beginning.

Couriers were continually passing and repassing between Paris and Versailles, while the union was in agitation; and, notwithstanding that it was pretty generally expected, yet the news of its having actually taken place produced as great demonstrations of joy among the Parisians, as if they had been afraid it could not happen. The most flattering ideas of national peace and prosperity were entertained by all ranks of people.

Mirabeau

Mirabeau seems to have entertained the same hopes of this coalition. The following are his words : “ Qu’il fera glorieux pour la France et pour nous, que cette grande revolution ne coûte à l’humanité ni des forfaits ni des crimes ! Les plus petits Etats n’ont souvent acheté une ombre de liberté, qu’au prix du sang le plus précieux. Une nation, trop fière de sa constitution et des vices de la nôtre, a souffert plus d’un siècle des convulsions et des guerres civiles, avant que d’affermir ses loix. L’Amerique même, dont le genie tutelaire des mondes semble récompenser aujourd’hui l’affranchissement qui est notre ouvrage, n’a joui de ce bien inestimable qu’après des revers sanglans et des combats longs et douteux. Et nous, Messieurs, nous verrons la même révolution s’opérer par le seul concours des lumières et des intentions patriotiques ! Nos combats sont de simples discussions, nos ennemis sont des préjugés pardonnables,

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donnables, nos victoires ne feront point cruelles, nos triomphes feront bénis par ceux qui feront subjugués les derniers.

“ L’histoire n’a trop souvent raconté les actions que de bêtes féroces, parmi lesquelles on distingue de loin en loin des héros. Il nous est permis d’espérer que nous commençons l’histoire des hommes, celle de frères, qui nés pour se rendre mutuellement heureux, sont d’accord presque dans leurs dissentimens, puisque leur objet est le même, et que leurs moyens seuls diffèrent*.”

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* How honourable will it be for France and for us, that this great revolution should be accomplished without offences and without crimes! Some of the most inconsiderable States have not been able to obtain the shadow of liberty, but at the expence of the most precious blood. One nation, too proud of her own constitution and of the faults of ours, underwent a whole age of civil wars and convulsions before she had her laws confirmed. America herself, the confirmation of whose liberty was our work, which the guardian genius of the world seems

The records of the world do not afford a more striking example of the vanity of human schemes, and the shortsightedness of those who are celebrated for the most penetrating judgment, than the rapidity with which consequences, directly contrary to what were expected, followed each other

seems this day to recompense, did not enjoy that ineffable blessing until after many severe struggles and many desperate and bloody battles. And we, gentlemen, have the happiness to see a revolution of the same nature brought about by the union of enlightened minds with patriotic intentions. Our battles are mere discussions; our enemies are pardonable prejudices; our victories, so far from being cruel, will be blessed by the conquered themselves.

History too often records actions which are worthy only of the most ferocious brutes, among whom, at long intervals, we can sometimes distinguish heroes. There is now reason to hope, that we have begun the history of men, of brothers, who, born for mutual happiness, agree even when they vary, since their object is the same, and their means only are different.

from this period—A Noblesse degraded and driven into exile—a Clergy massacred—some of the most distinguished Deputies of the Tiers-Etat brought to the scaffold by the influence of men, whose names were unknown to the public when the States-General were assembled. Mirabeau himself did not live long enough to be a witness or a victim of the cruellest of these scenes of anarchy and bloodshed, and to prove whether, as is the opinion of some, his extraordinary talents could have at once secured liberty and preserved the monarchy: but Bailly, the first President of the National Assembly, was afterwards put to death, when a tribunal of assassins became the instruments of a thousand murders, and when, instead of liberty and equality, a despotism was established, which rendered the whole inhabitants of France *equally* slaves.

That the hopes of so many millions of men have been so miserably blasted; that
they

they have missed the fair expectation of founding a government upon the solid basis of rational freedom, instead of rearing a castle in the air on the ideal pillars of impracticable equality, will be regretted by every friend of liberty and of humanity. While France is at war with Great Britain, it is the duty, and will be the endeavour, of every good British subject, to do all in his power to defeat her schemes, and assist his country against her ; but how wretchedly narrowed must that man's mind be, by national or political prejudices, who joins in the despicable cant, that France is the natural enemy of Great Britain ! Can the two most enlightened nations of the world, who cultivate philosophy, all the sciences, every liberal art, with more success than any other, be naturally enemies ? To judge of the French nation from a few monsters, who have been engendered in the course of this revolution ; and, from the crimes which

they have committed, to conclude that the people are naturally cruel and blood-thirsty, is reasoning as profoundly as those who about a century and a half ago, when England was under the yoke of an hypocritical usurper and a fanatical army, concluded that the English were all a set of hypocrites or fanatics. In spite of temporary confusions, the national characteristic of both countries remains the same. That of France has always been vivacity and ingenuity, her inhabitants being distinguished in every art to which they applied. In times of tranquillity they excelled most nations in the arts of peace; and since they have been driven to confine themselves to the art of war, it does not appear that they are inferior to the most warlike of their neighbours. I cannot help considering them, therefore, in point of ingenuity, and in every thing which requires the powers of understanding or genius, as the second nation

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tion in the world. My decided opinion is, that they are the second ; but I should rather hope, that the other nations of Europe would rank them only as the third ; and this I do on the principle of the ancient Roman, who said, that what convinced him that the Romans were the first nation in the world was, that all other nations allowed them to be the second.

When the delightful climate and cheering productions of the fine and fertile country of France are taken also into consideration, and, above all, when we recollect the natural temper of the inhabitants, so open to all the sources of cheerfulness and so shut against those of melancholy, which made them enjoy prosperity more and feel misfortune less than any other people ; that enlivening gaiety which taught them to banish ennui, relax the stiff features of formality, enliven gloom, and render joy more joyful ; when we reflect on these circumstances, and

on the unexampled calamities into which so many millions of human creatures, so formed, are involved; we must acknowledge that the sum total of human happiness destroyed is greater, than would have happened from the same calamities falling on the same number of any other people in the known world,

CHAPTER XI.

Means used to prejudice the People against the Nobles—Imprudent Conduct of the Count d'Artois—Eleven Soldiers of the French Foot Guards appeal to the People—are taken out of Prison and protected—Treasonable Expressions—Troops approach Paris and Versailles—Discourse of Mirabeau—An Address from the Assembly to the King—His Answer—Secret Councils—General Alarm—Feast in the Elysian Fields—Dismission of M. Necker—Tumults at Paris.

AS the refusal of the privileged orders to unite with the Tiers-Etat had been made use of as the pretext for the clamour and discontent to which the populace had been incited, it was naturally to be expected that, this source of discontent being removed

removed at the desire of the King, tranquillity and confidence would be restored.

The universal rejoicing which took place at Paris and all over France seemed to indicate this ; but those appearances were of short duration. Some Deputies were still convinced, that the Court meant the dissolution of the Assembly, and waited only till a sufficient number of troops were drawn together near the capital to render the measure safe. These men were at great pains to spread this opinion, and to remind the public that the King had not desired the two orders to unite until he thought himself in personal danger by their remaining any longer separated ; and that they had agreed to it at last not in compliance with the wishes or for the good of the people, but merely in obedience to the King, whose mandates they were ever ready to obey without any regard to the public benefit. To give this opinion the most rapid and
extensive

extensive circulation, they used a means which in France far exceeds the power of pamphlets or newspapers—namely, conveying it in a kind of witticism or play upon words. It was said, that the Nobles and Clergy were so fond of deliberating *par ordre*, that they could not be united to the Commons otherwise than *par ordre*; and it was added, that the two privileged orders could not be prevailed on to deliberate *par tête*, until they found themselves in danger of being forced to deliberate *sans tête*. These jokes will not be thought marvellously bright; they were repeated, however, by nine out of ten who heard them, and had the effect which their authors intended.

The political theatres erected in the garden of the Palais Royal above mentioned continued their factious debates in the hearing of the populace; and many individuals were on those occasions represented as the determined enemies of the people, particularly

larly M. Berthier, Intendant de Paris, M. Foulon, Conseiller d'Etat, the Count d'Artois, the Prince of Condé, the Duke of Bourbon, and many others. The impresson against them, which was thus given to the populace, proved fatal in a short time to the two former, and contributed no doubt to the flight of the latter, which has been since thought to have had such ruinous consequences to the whole French Noblesse.

The Duke of Orleans was supposed, with great probability, to encourage these debates, and all the factious proceedings in this garden, which provoked the Count d'Artois to a measure, than which nothing could have been more ill timed.

It had long been the custom, as a mark of respect to the Orleans family, for a detachment of Swiss to mount guard at the Palais Royal. The Count d'Artois was Colonel of the Swiss guards. In a moment of indignation at the Duke of Orleans, he
gave

gave orders that the guard should be discontinued, the immediate effect of which was, rendering himself more odious to the people, and the Duke more respected; and what puts this inconsiderate measure in a ridiculous point of view, the Count found it necessary to restore the guard a few days after it had been removed.

The heat and animosity against the Court, which was continually kept alive in the centre of faction at the Palais Royal, diffused its influence over the whole circumference of Paris, and produced frequent disorders. The King's foot guards themselves, by their constant intercourse with the inhabitants of Paris and Versailles, were infected with the spirit of the times, and had shewn on some occasions a mutinous disposition, and on others had even joined in certain disorderly scenes in the streets and squares; so that a government, with the purest intentions, might have thought it expedient at this time,

time, when, independent of other causes of tumult, there was a scarcity of provisions, to order a considerable reinforcement of troops towards the capital, with no other view than the maintenance of tranquillity and the protection of the inhabitants. But this consideration did not prevent the arrival of troops to the neighbourhood of Paris being imputed to some scheme of overawing the capital and dissolving the Assembly; and this was not the suspicion of the factious only, but also of many well-meaning citizens of Paris. On account of the disorderly conduct of the French guards, they had been ordered to remain in their barracks; in contempt of which many of them had publicly appeared in the Palais Royal, and had been entertained by the people there with wine and other refreshments. For this and other acts of disobedience, eleven were confined in the prison of the Abbaye until a court martial should be summoned for their trial.

trial. On the evening of the 30th of June, a letter was thrown into the Café de Foy, the most frequented in the Palais Royal. It was an appeal from the prisoners to the patriots in that coffee-house from the cruelty and injustice of their officers. The letter was read, not only to the company within but to the groups without the coffee-house. The soldiers represented themselves “ as the victims of their patriotism; that their real crime was, their having refused to fire on the people during a late tumult; and that they were to be transported that very night to the infamous prison of the Bicêtre, if they were not protected by their fellow-citizens. “ Shall we allow those brave soldiers to be punished, because they would not shed the blood of the people?” cried an orator mounted on a chair. “ Let us go immediately to the Abbaye, and set them at liberty.” The cry *à l’Abbaye ! à l’Abbaye !* was instantly heard on all sides; and with-

out farther proof of the facts alleged by the prisoners, about two hundred men rushed out of the square of the Palais Royal. The band augmented on the way, and consisted of several thousands by the time they reached the prison. They immediately broke open the gates; and as they were returning with the prisoners, a troop of dragoons and another of hussars galloped up to them with sabres drawn. The people seized the reins of the horses, and asked if they meant to slaughter their friends. Those on horseback directly sheathed their swords, pulled off their helmets in proof of amity, and joined the crowd in the cry of *Vive la Nation!* The prisoners were then carried in triumph from the Abbaye, which is in the suburbs of St. Germain, to the Palais Royal on the other side of the Seine, where they were received with acclamations of joy, treated with wine and provisions from the coffee-houses, and guarded during
the

the night by a great number of armed citizens, who offered themselves for this service, on its being suggested that the prisoners might be seized in the night by the order of their commanding officer.

It was next determined to send a deputation to the National Assembly in favour of the prisoners. Twenty of the most active of those who had effected their deliverance were chosen, and set out directly for Versailles. On their arrival they went to the house of M. Bailly, and delivered to him a letter in the name of the *public*, requesting the protection of the National Assembly for the soldiers, whom they denominated the victims of their patriotism. M. Bailly, having read this letter, said that he did not think the Assembly could receive this deputation, which, although they pretended to have been sent by the public, had in truth no public character. This affair, however, produced a long debate, in which

it was observed, that the Noblesse in general were for the maintenance of discipline ; the Clergy, without expressing any indignation at the conduct of the prisoners, abstained nevertheless from any recommendation in their favour ; while the Deputies of the Tiers entirely favoured them, and were for recommending them to the King's goodness. The debate terminated in a resolution, that the President should inform the deputation from Paris, that the Assembly would in an address to the King beg of him " to employ, for the establishment of public tranquillity, the infallible means of clemency."

The deputation was sent accordingly. It was composed of Deputies from all the three orders. The Archbishop of Paris being of the number, delivered the address to the King, whose answer imported that he approved of what the Assembly had done, and that he would within a short time let the
States-

States-General know his final determination. As nobody had any doubt what his final determination would be, the answer would have given general satisfaction, had his Majesty not used the term *States-General*, which displeased some members. This term was suppressed, however, in the account published of the proceedings by the Assembly.

In the mean time the eleven soldiers were lodged and feasted in the Hotel de Geneve contiguous to the Palais Royal, which, with other houses near it, was illuminated during the night ; and in the day the prisoners were under the necessity of remaining constantly at the windows in sight of the populace.

The final answer of the King imported that the liberty of the soldiers would be the immediate consequence of the re-establishment of public order. Nobody could be deceived by these formalities : it was evident

that the King's authority was held as nothing, and that he had it not in his power either to punish the foldiers, or thofe who had forced the prifon and fet them at liberty. On receiving this anfwer, however, thofe who had the foldiers under their protection were inftructed to conduct them to the Abbaye as prifoners ; which they did, under the full perfuafion that they were to be fet at liberty by an order from the King. If this article was not exprefsly ftipulated, it is evident that it was fully underftood. For this reafon the praifes of the King's clemency, which were oftentatiously poured forth in the Affembly on this occafion, were confidered as ironical and infulting, and perhaps haftened the rafh meafures which were foon after adopted.

Every intemperate and infolent expreffion uttered by the Deputies in the Affembly, and many which fell from them in private converfation, were carefully repeated

to the King by those who wished to prompt him to some more vigorous measures than any he had hitherto adopted.

None of the reports of this nature carried to Court was likely to make more impression than what was reported of Mirabeau—namely, that on a certain occasion, while he declared himself a friend to monarchy, he had added, that “ it was of little importance whether they had Lewis XVI. or Lewis XVII. on the throne.” There is the more reason to believe that Mirabeau might have allowed this or some expression to the same tendency to have escaped from him, as he had often declared that it was a fortunate circumstance for Great Britain, that she had deviated from the direct hereditary succession in the act of settlement of the crown; and whether this observation was made in consequence of a plan in favour of the Duke of Orleans, or, which is much more probable, was merely the effect

of a speculative opinion unconnected with any formed design, the mention of such a thing, with the comments which would probably be made by those who repeated it, was likely to strike terror on the mind not only of the King, but of his brothers and other Princes of the Blood who detested the Duke of Orleans*.

The strong impression made by those reports might contribute greatly to induce the King to adopt a more vigorous and decided plan of conduct than he had hitherto done.

To what extent this was meant to be carried cannot be known. That was probably never fixed upon by the parties them-

* There is no sufficient reason to suspect, that Mirabeau ever had formed a conspiracy for placing the Duke of Orleans on the throne: all the length he ever went was for having him created Lieutenant General of the kingdom; and even that he soon abandoned, from the contempt he had for the character of the Duke.

selves,

themselves, and would have depended on future incidents; but it was evident, from the great numbers of troops which by repeated orders had been drawn nearer and nearer the capital, from the manner they were posted, and from the character of the Marshal Broglio under whose command they were put, that some very important object was in view. It is not surprising, therefore, that the popular Deputies were under apprehensions both for the existence of the Assembly and for their own personal liberty.

The alarm was hourly augmenting, and the danger loudly announced by Mirabeau, in a speech which he pronounced in the Assembly on the 8th of July, from which what follows is an extract: “ *Dejà un grand nombre de troupes nous environnoient, il en est arrivé d’avantage, il en arrive chaque jour; elles accourent de toutes parts. Trente-cinq mille hommes sont déjà*

repartis entre Paris et Versailles. On en attend vingt mille. Des trains d'artillerie les suivent ; des points sont désignés pour des batteries ; on s'assure de toutes les communications ; on intercepte tous les passages ; nos chemins, nos ponts, nos promenades, sont changés en postes militaires. Des événemens publics, des faits cachés, des ordres secrets, des contre-ordres précipités, les préparatifs de la guerre, en un mot, frappent tous les yeux et remplissent d'indignation tous les cœurs.

“ De quel œil ce peuple, affailli de tant de calamités, verra-t-il cette foule de soldats oisifs venir lui disputer les restes de sa subsistance ? Le contraste de l'abondance des uns (du pain aux yeux de celui qui a faim est l'abondance), le contraste de l'abondance des uns et de l'indigence des autres, de la sécurité du soldat, à-qui la manne tombe sans qu'il ait jamais besoin de penser au lendemain, et des angoisses du peuple, qui n'ob-

tient

tient rien qu'au prix des travaux pénibles et des sueurs douloureuses ; ce contraste est fait pour porter le désespoir dans les cœurs* !”

This

* We were already surrounded by a great number of troops ; more were ordered ; more arrive every day ; they hurry from all quarters. Thirty-five thousand are posted between Paris and Versailles ; a reinforcement of twenty thousand is expected ; artillery follow, and the proper places for erecting batteries are fixed upon ; all passes are seized ; our highways, our bridges, and our public walks, are changed into military posts. The events which are published, those which are endeavoured to be concealed, secret orders, sudden counter orders ; in a word, all those warlike preparations strike every eye and fill every heart with indignation.

How will a people, assailed with so many calamities, bear that a crowd of idle soldiers should come and dispute with them the remnant of their provisions ? The contrast between the luxury—(for bread is a luxury in the estimation of those who are hungry)—the contrast between the luxury enjoyed by one and the indigence of the other ; the ease of the soldiers, to whom *manna falls* without their needing to think of to-mor-

row ;

This was one of the most eloquent speeches that Mirabeau ever pronounced, and made an irresistible impression on the Assembly. He concluded by an observation which merits deep attention. “ Enfin, ont-ils prévu, les conseillers de ces mesures, ont-ils prévu les suites qu’elles entraînent pour la sécurité même du trône? Ont-ils étudié dans l’histoire de tous les peuples comment les révolutions ont commencé, comment elles se sont opérées? Ont-ils observé par quel enchaînement funeste de circonstances, les esprits les plus sages sont jettés hors de toutes les limites de la moderation, et par quelle impulsion terrible, un peuple éniuré se précipite vers des excès dont la première idée l’eût fait frémir*.”

The

row; and the painful efforts of the people, who obtain nothing but by hard labour and the sweat of their brows, is sufficient to make men desperate.

* Have the counsellors of these measures foreseen or estimated what their consequences may be to the

Crown

The consequence was an address from the Assembly to the King, that he would order the troops which alarmed the citizens, and constrained the debates of the Assembly, to withdraw from the neighbourhood of Paris and Versailles. The address was drawn up by Mirabeau. What follows is a short specimen : “ Prêts à résister à tous les commandemens arbitraires de ceux qui abusent de votre nom, parce qu’ils sont ennemis des loix ; notre fidélité même nous ordonne cette résistance ; et nous nous honorerons toujours de mériter les reproches que notre fermeté nous attire.

“ Sire, nous vous en conjurons au nom de la patrie, au nom de votre bonheur, et

Crown itself? Have they studied in the history of nations, how revolutions have begun, and how they operate? Have they observed, by what mournful concatenation of circumstances, men of the greatest prudence are sometimes led beyond the bounds of moderation, and with what a terrible impulse an intoxicated populace are hurried into excesses, of which the first idea would have shocked them?

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de votre gloire ; renvoyez vos foldats aux postes d'où vos confeillers les ont tirés ; renvoyez cette artillerie, destinée à couvrir vos frontières ; renvoyez furtout les troupes étrangères, ces alliés de la nation, que nous payons pour défendre et non pour troubler nos foyers. Votre Majesté n'en a pas besoin : eh pourquoi un Monarque, adoré de vingt-cinq millions de François, feroit-il accourir à grands frais autour du trône quelques milliers d'étrangers? Sire, au milieu de vos enfans, foyez gardé par leur amour. Les Députés de la Nation font appellés à consacrer avec vous les droits éminens de la royauté, fur la bafe immuable de la liberté du peuple ; mais lorsqu'ils rempliffent leur devoir, lorsqu'ils cedent à leur raifon, à leurs fentimens, les expoferiez-vous au foupçon de n'avoir cédé qu'à la crainte?"

&c.*

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* Determined to resist the arbitrary orders of those who abuse your name, because they are the enemies
of

It was known that an address of this nature was to be moved, and several members were prepared to oppose it; but the

of law, our fidelity to your Majesty exacts this resistance, and we will always glory in deserving the reproaches which our firmness draws upon us.

We conjure you, Sire, in the name of our native country, in the name of your own happiness and glory, send your soldiers to the posts from which your counsellors have drawn them; send back that artillery which was destined to defend the frontiers; above all, order back the foreign troops, those allies of the nation whom we pay that they may defend, not overawe, the inhabitants. Your Majesty has no need of such auxiliaries. Why should a Monarch, adored by five-and-twenty millions of Frenchmen, surround his throne at a great expence with some thousand strangers?

Sire, in the midst of your children, your best guard is their affection. The Deputies of the Nation are called to consecrate with you the eminent rights of royalty, on the immoveable basis of public liberty; but while they are fulfilling this duty, while they are obeying the dictates of reason and of affection, would you expose them to the suspicion that they were determined by fear only? &c.

impreſſion

impression which Mirabeau's speech made was so strong, that it was evident that all opposition would be vain; they also dreaded lest their opposition should be imputed to fear.

It was observed by the Abbé Sieyes, that it was a maxim in the province of Brittany, that no troops should be allowed to come nearer than ten leagues to the place in which the States-General were assembled; and it was proposed by another Deputy to impeach the advisers of this manœuvre, of ordering the troops so near to the Assembly, that the execration of their cotemporaries, added he, might anticipate that of posterity. But, in the midst of all this warmth, M. Biauzat observed, that it would be but decent to expunge one article from the address proposed by Mirabeau, namely, that of establishing a guard of citizens, because it was too much to arm the people at the very time when they addressed the King to disarm himself. This was thought reasonable, and M. Biauzat's

motion was adopted. The address was ordered to be read a second time, because the frequent and loud bursts of applause prevented it from being distinctly and connectedly heard at the first reading. A deputation of 24 members, six from the two first orders, and twelve from the third, were appointed to carry it to the King. Among the latter was Mirabeau himself, with one who has become most notorious since, and who, from the circumstance of being chosen for this deputation, it is probable, was in some degree distinguished even at this period, namely Maximilien Robespierre.

The address being carried by the deputation to the palace was read by M. Clermont-Tonnerre to the King, who in his answer declared, that the frequent disorders in the capital were the sole reason for his having called the troops around Paris, as it was an essential part of his duty to watch over the
trans-

tranquillity of that city, to protect the citizens, and prevent new disorders; that this measure, so far from putting any constraint on the debates of the Assembly, would free the members from all dread of tumults and disorders. Nevertheless, if the presence of the troops, so necessary in the neighbourhood of Paris, gave umbrage, he was willing at the request of the Assembly to transfer the States-General to Noyon or Soissons; in which case he himself should repair to Compeign, that he might maintain the requisite intercourse with the Assembly."

When the King's answer was read to the Assembly, it was applauded by some, and did not seem displeasing to any. M. de Crillon said, that as his Majesty had given his word, that he had no other view in ordering the troops to advance but the protection of his own person and of the capital, the Assembly ought to rest satisfied.

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We have done our duty to the nation, he added, in requiring freedom to the Assembly; we ought next to manifest our duty to the King, by shewing we have confidence in his royal word.

This reasoning of M. Crillon will not appear conclusive to all the world. None of the Deputies, however, seemed inclined to express any want of confidence in the King's word until M. Mirabeau observed, that whatever reliance they might have on what the King had said, they could have none on Ministers, who were always ready to mislead his good intentions; that the not attending sufficiently to this distinction had often made the affectionate confidence which Frenchmen placed in their monarchs produce the effects of a vice rather than of a virtue, and had drawn the French nation, century after century, into much misery; but he hoped that their eyes would now be opened, unless they were resolved

to act for ever the part of children, and continue always mutinous and always slavish. He proceeded to shew them that the King's answer was a complete refusal of their request; that they had not petitioned to have the Assembly removed to any other place; but that the troops should be ordered to remove from the neighbourhood of Paris and Versailles; that if they were inclined to transfer their meetings elsewhere, Noyon or Soissons ought to be among the last places in which they should wish to assemble, because there they would be between the troops which invested Paris, and those which might be suddenly drawn from Flanders and Alsace.

Although the Assembly were struck with the force of Mirabeau's reasoning, he did not prevail on them to renew the petition; and their moderation in this instance, which could only proceed from a sentiment of respect to the King, makes the violent measures

tures that were immediately taken by the Administration appear the more rash and impolitic.

Secret Councils were held within the palace. The principal officers of the troops attended the King's levee every morning. Couriers were observed continually passing from Versailles to the different detachments posted at St. Cloud and Séves, and not unfrequently in the middle of the night. The King's life guards were in constant activity; those who were not on guard within the palace were patrolling around it on horseback; all the Swiss guards were kept on duty near it; and cannon were placed facing the avenues.

Those appearances were sufficient of themselves to have roused expectation in all, and to have created terror in some who were in situations to observe them. Various reports of mysterious import were also in circulation, and dark menacing expressions

were whispered as having fallen from persons supposed to be in the secrets of the Cabinet. A strong suspicion existed among the Deputies, that some new plan was adopted; what it precisely was they could not know, but they were pretty certain, that whatever danger there might be must depend on the troops, and for that reason the greatest pains had been taken by the leaders of the popular party in the Assembly and their friends at Paris to gain them. They knew that they had already succeeded in a considerable degree with regard to the French foot guards; and they strove, with their assistance and every other means in their power, to make the same impression on the other regiments as they arrived. Parties of citizens of both sexes were chosen to mix with the soldiers, and occasionally to treat them with wine. On the 10th of July, a scene took place on the plain called the Elysian Fields, adjacent to the gardens of
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the Tuileries, which, it is probable, struck the Court so much as to accelerate the execution of their plan. A considerable number of cannoniers, of French guards, of dragoons of different regiments, were invited to an entertainment prepared in these fields at the expence of some citizens of Paris, and in the sight of an immense crowd of spectators. The soldiers were plentifully feasted, and a sufficient quantity of wine was served to increase their gaiety, without rendering them disorderly. At eight in the evening the serjeants and corporals came in search of the soldiers; they were invited to partake in the feast, and to drink success to the Tiers-Etat; which they did, and returned in high good humour to their barracks, singing the praises of the citizens of Paris.

The account of this scene which was carried to Versailles seems not only to have filled the King's new counsellors with alarm, but also to have deprived them of common

prudence. With no certainty of the obedience of the troops, with even considerable reason to doubt it, and an absolute certainty of the seditious disposition of the people, and of their enthusiastic attachment to M. Necker, it was hardly to be conceived that the first step the Council would take should be the dismissal of this favourite Minister. On the 11th of July, however, he received an order to leave the kingdom in twenty-four hours, Without acquainting any individual even of his own family with the order he had received, he set out the same evening ; and it was not publicly known at Versailles till the following day, when a new Administration was announced, at the head of which were the Marshal Broglio and M. de Breteuil.

Although nothing could have been less expected than the dismissal of M. Necker at this particular time, yet nothing was more probable than the general alarm and

indignation which it produced. Paris was filled with consternation; the shops and theatres were immediately shut; the people crowded the streets and squares; to increase the emotion and confusion, the busts of M. Necker and of the Duke of Orleans, who was reported to have also been ordered into exile, were paraded through the streets covered with crape in mournful procession. A party of dragoons were foolishly ordered to attack the attending multitude, and break the busts. The Prince de Lambesc was at the head of a body of cavalry on the Place of Lewis XV. Some stones were thrown; the cavalry made a charge on the crowd, and the Prince was said to have wounded with his sabre an old man in the Tuileries. The affrighted populace rushed from the garden into the streets, crying *To arms!* the alarm bells were sounded; the armourers' shops were broken open; every one armed himself as he could; many of the French

guards left their barracks to join the people ; the cavalry that had been assembled to overawe them durst not appear ; bodies of armed men patrolled the streets during the whole of this night of alarm, for the protection of the citizens. Some ruffians, however, under the same pretence committed acts of robbery and pillage ; but not a twentieth part of the excesses took place that might have been expected at a time of such universal consternation.

On the following day it was proposed, that a regular body of militia should be immediately formed, as the best means of preventing a general pillage. This measure being approved, the execution was rendered easy by Paris having been divided into districts, on account of the late election of Deputies for the States-General. Those electors assembled at their respective sections, classed the citizens, appointed commanders to each division, most of them
 officers

officers retired from the service, and a body of 48,000 men was formed that very day, which entirely relieved the inhabitants from the fear of pillage in the ensuing night, and greatly diminished their apprehensions from the regular troops which surrounded them*.

A deputation from the committee assembled in the Hotel de Ville was sent to the National Assembly at Versailles, acquainting them with the measures they had taken for restoring the public tranquillity. The As-

* This circumstance of the capital having been divided into districts, and the electors in each ascertained, had more influence on the revolution than is generally imagined; for, when any danger was dreaded, the electors were ordered to assemble at their respective districts, who had all an intercourse with each other; an army was instantly formed, and in some measure, according to their phrase, organized. Whatever benefit may have arisen from this on the present occasion, it certainly had one baneful effect, namely, that of giving the department of Paris a controul over all the other departments.

fembly petitioned the King with more earnestness than ever to order the troops to be withdrawn, stating their presence as the cause of all the insurrections.

CHAPTER XII.

Reflections on the Influence of public Opinion—on Government—King's Answer to the Assembly's Address occasions ill Humour—Formation of an armed Force by the Inhabitants of Paris—30,000 Muskets found at the Invalides—Bastille attacked and taken—Murder of M. de Launay and others—Deputations from the Assembly to the King—Scene at the Orangerie—Speech of Mirabeau—The King changes his Measures—comes to the National Assembly—A Deputation sent to Paris—Rejoicings—The King visits Paris—Reflections.

IT is highly probable from the character of Lewis XVI. that he was inclined to the suppression of many abuses of the ancient government, and sincerely wished the
happiness

happiness of his subjects, even at the expence of a diminution of his own authority; but it was difficult to persuade the nation, that such were his wishes and intentions from the moment that it was believed he had been prevailed on to employ military force. Those who persuaded him to have recourse to such an expedient acted not only contrary to justice and prudence, but also contrary to the nature and disposition of the Prince they pretended to serve; for the most ignorant of them must have known, that in the actual state of France it was impossible to controul the National Assembly, to dissolve them, and to re-establish the ancient government by force, without so much bloodshed as he would have thought infinitely too dear a purchase for the objects to be obtained. In prevailing on the too easy tempered Monarch to adopt this measure, therefore, it is plain, that like the generality of those who affect to be in a
peculiar

peculiar manner the friends of Kings, their own places and pensions, and offices which they saw in danger, were all they were anxious to preserve, and for which they were willing to risk all the horrors of war, and to sacrifice the glory, happiness, and even the life of the Prince to whom they professed such wonderful attachment.

Indeed it was evident, that the public opinion on the subject of government was so universally changed, and the minds of the people so heated with the idea of freedom, that double the military force that was sufficient to maintain the ancient government could not re-establish the same system, nor sustain it for any length of time in France, even if it could have been re-established. It is not possible for a government to subsist long in any country where knowledge is pretty generally diffused, against the decided opinion and wishes of
of

of a great majority of the inhabitants; and a great majority of such inhabitants are seldom or never brought to be decidedly against their government unless it is oppressive. For, although it occasionally happens that ignorant men, and those who are needy from idleness, may be induced by the ambitious and designing to make a clamour against oppressions which they never felt, and for rights which they do not value, it is fortunate for the peace of society, that *unfounded* clamours of this kind oftener end in the disgrace or destruction of those who make them, than of the government against which they are made: but when grievances are felt by the most industrious, and acknowledged by a great majority of the most intelligent to proceed from the vices of the government, *that* government cannot exist long in the present state of men's minds all over Europe.

In Turkey, indeed, a very small military
esta-

establishment in proportion to the population of the country is adequate to the purposes of government, and to keep the people in slavery ; because they have no idea of any other kind of government but a despotic one. They are taught to believe, and in general they do believe, that it is the will of Heaven that the descendants or successors of Mahomet should reign with uncontrouled sway over them ; that it is their duty to submit to his orders as to the decrees of Providence, however unaccountable or severe they may be ; that resistance would be impious and fruitless in both cases, as in the one they would have the host of Heaven against them, and in the other not only that, but also the Janissaries of the Sultan.

The same opinion prevails, and of course the same despotism exists, all over Asia and Africa. The time was, when the right divine of Kings to govern wrong, the absurd and impious doctrine, that the crown is held

held by divine, hereditary, and indefeasible right, was taught with success in Europe. That doctrine was exploded in England; and the consequence was the admirable constitution established in the year 1688, which every Briton has so much reason to bless and maintain.

The immense armies which a jealousy of the neighbouring powers renders necessary to be constantly kept up by some nations of Europe, are not the only cause of the arbitrary nature of their governments. The peasants and a very large proportion of the other inhabitants of Russia and a great part of Germany never knew freedom, have no ideas on government, and are rather pleased with the supreme and unlimited power of their Sovereign, because it is from that alone they expect relief from the more intolerable oppression of their immediate lords. But give the majority of the inhabitants of Russia and Germany the same opinions that

that prevail in Great Britain; and an annihilation of the oppression of the Lords, with a limitation of the Sovereign's power, would follow in spite of the efforts, but more probably with the concurrence, of the armies.

Ignorance and imposture have been the chief and lasting supports of every despotic government. When ignorance is removed from any country, imposture and abuses must fly also; and although standing armies may continue to be the defenders, they will refuse to be the enslavers of their country*.

However

* This is believed and dreaded by many whose importance and wealth arise from the oppressive privileges granted in the days of ignorance, and by those who fatten on abuses and in the enjoyment of sinecure offices. They wish every abuse to remain sacred and untouched, and fear nothing so much as the diffusion of knowledge. They consider the exercise of reason as a curse to the lower classes of society, assert that ignorance is the greatest blessing that can befall them, and execrate phi-

However extraordinary it may appear, many circumstances evince, that, at the time when M. Necker was dismissed, the Court of Versailles had no idea of the very critical state in which things were. The night of the 12th, which had spread such general terror at Paris, was spent by the courtiers at Versailles in dancing and revelry. The King's answer to this new address from the

losophy and philosophers as the disturbers of the peace of mankind. In support of these assertions, they quote the crimes of those monsters of wickedness who have disgraced the French Revolution and the cause of Freedom. The question simply is, Whether it be expedient or not that rational creatures should improve and exercise their reason? If that is answered in the affirmative, it is to no purpose to say that some men use their reasoning powers to ill purposes: by the same train of reasoning they might endeavour to prove, that lamps and candles, and all the inventions by which men have contrived to obtain light and dissipate darkness, are pernicious to society, because house-breakers and murderers make use of dark lanterns.

National

National Assembly sufficiently shewed the small impression it had made. It imported, "that he was the proper judge how to employ his troops, and where to place them; that, although some cities could maintain tranquillity within their walls by their own municipal force, the immense population of Paris rendered it impracticable there."

The Assembly were at no pains to conceal their ill humour at this answer. They decreed, that M. Necker, and the other Ministers who had been dismissed, retained the esteem and confidence of the Assembly; that they considered the new Ministers as responsible for the disasters that might attend the present measures, particularly that of advising the King not to send the troops away from Paris and Versailles, which the Assembly persisted in requesting; finally, they put the public debt under the safeguard of the national honour, and ordered these resolutions to be presented to the King.

by the President, and with their former decrees to be printed, for the information of the public. The Assembly continued sitting all the night.

The accounts of the King's answer, and the subsequent decrees and conduct of the Assembly, arrived at Paris on the morning of the 13th, when the inhabitants had just learned, that the regiments encamped in the Elysian Fields had moved from thence, without the motive of their removal or the place to which they had gone being known. The most dismal apprehensions of an impending attack were conceived; rage and indignation augmented; the committee of electors in the Hotel de Ville redoubled their zeal for enrolling men and forming new batallions; what muskets could be found were distributed among those who had been first regimented; all the workmen were employed in making pikes and such arms as could be soonest formed, and were

most suitable to undisciplined troops; the streets in some parts were unpaved in expectation of a bombardment; the women carried quantities of stones to the upper stories, with the design of throwing them on the enemy as they marched through the street beneath; and the cries of vigilance and alarm resounded at intervals all the night in every quarter of the town, which was partially and dimly illuminated, so as to render the general gloom more striking.

The steadiness and address shewn in so suddenly forming into some degree of regularity and subordination so large a body of men, in a capital so licentious as Paris, and this by no established authority, but entirely by a committee chosen by the electors, forms a strong contrast with the negligence and want of foresight of the Cabinet at Versailles. After the bold measures of dismissing a most popular minister, forming a new administration of men disliked by the

people, and rejecting the earnest and repeated petition of the National Assembly, it was naturally to be expected that some means would have been used to prevent insurrections in the capital, where there was so much reason to think they would take place, and to suppress or render them abortive in case they should. It was natural to expect, that the Bastille would have been provided and strengthened, and that a place of so much importance as the Hospital of Invalides would have been secured by a large detachment from the troops cantoned around Paris. None of these obvious measures were thought of.

On the 14th the Hospital of Invalides was forced, and 30,000 muskets found, which, with a variety of weapons discovered the same day at the Garde-Meuble, were distributed among the people, who being elevated by this success, hurried in crowds from the Invalides to the Bastille, in the resolution,

resolution to assault and destroy that detested fortress. Some squadrons of dragoons had been observed that morning near the entrance of the suburbs of St. Antoine; and it was noticed at the same time that, contrary to custom, the cannon of the Bastille were pointed towards the principal street of the same quarter. A message had been sent by the committee at the Town-house to M. de Launay, the Governor, to remonstrate with him on this menacing appearance. It was while this was in agitation, that the Hospital of Invalides had been forced, and the arms seized, which had determined the people to exact that the Bastille should be delivered up to them also. That fortress was soon blockaded by the multitude: a deputation was sent from one district of Paris to make proposals to the Governor; the Deputy was attended by a promiscuous crowd, which, while he was conducted to the Governor, were left in an

outer court. This parley having proved ineffectual, the Deputy retired ; but at the same moment some of those in the outer court having advanced beyond the prescribed limits, and still continuing to advance, were checked by a fire from the garrison, which killed and wounded several.

It is probable that this happened through mistake on the one side or the other ; but, if there was design, it seems most likely that it was on the part of the people, in attempting to surprise the garrison. The story which was spread, and generally believed at the time, of the Governor's having allured them within the court, with a design to massacre them, is improbable and almost absurd. He must have perceived, that such an open piece of treachery would end in his own destruction ; he must have known that at all events he would be obliged to surrender soon ; for, independent of many other necessities, he was in want of provisions ;

provisions ; and after such perfidious conduct, nothing could have saved him from the rage of the people. Whatever occasioned the first firing of the garrison upon the people, its immediate effect was to swell their rage into madness. Proposals of capitulation and indications of a disposition to surrender were no longer regarded. The fortress was assaulted with impetuosity, and defended feebly. However zealous the Governor may have been, he could not inspire the garrison with the same ardour. After many proofs of the most daring intrepidity by those who headed the assault, the fortress was carried. Those who had the merit of the exploit saved M. de Launay from being immediately torn in pieces by the multitude which poured in from all quarters, and conducted him with difficulty and danger to the Hotel de Ville, but were unable to prevent his being massacred by the cowardly rabble which surrounded it, and who had

no part in the taking of the Bastile. M. de Lofme, his Major, a person distinguished for his humanity to the prisoners, was at the same time a victim to the undistinguishing fury of those wretches. Their thirst of blood was so great, that although the Marquis de Pilleport, who had been confined five years in the Bastile, rushed among them and proclaimed the humanity of M. de Lofme to himself and other prisoners, he was not listened to, but insulted, wounded, and escaped not without difficulty, with his life. M. de Fleffelles, the Prevôt des Marchands, of a character less popular, but who seems to have been guilty of nothing which candour could have thought a proof of guilt, incurred the same fate, and the heads of all three being fixed upon pikes were carried in triumph through the streets.

To this shocking practice, begun in a moment of phrensy, is owing perhaps that taste for bloody exhibitions, which the Parisian

Parisian populace are accused of possessing to such a degree. Even if the death of the persons were just, to gratify the multitude with the spectacle of carrying their heads on pikes is most injudicious; for it perverts the public mind, and has a tendency to create a taste for cruelty where it does not exist, and to cultivate and cherish it where it does?

Rumours of the enemy's approach became more frequent as the night advanced, and towards midnight it was asserted that they were just at hand. This induced a numerous body of the inhabitants to drag some cannon to the barrier *d'Enfer*; for as in the opinion of the multitude the enemy's great auxiliary lay in that quarter, it was universally agreed the attack would be made from thence. When the citizens arrived with their cannon, however, it was so dark that no enemy could be seen; and they made such a noise and clamour, that he
could

could not have been heard, however near he might have been. To make sure in all events, however, they discharged their artillery and muskets, and then returned in triumph with the comfortable news to their fellow citizens, that the assailants were entirely defeated and dispersed.

That there was no account of the loss on the part of the enemy in this engagement is not wonderful ; but, considering the darkness of the night, with the confusion and inexperience of the Parisian army, it is a little surprising that no mention was made of any killed or wounded among them by their own fire in this action.

The National Assembly continued sitting from the 13th to the 15th. They had sent two new deputations to the King, on the old subject of ordering the forces to be removed. To the first the King answered, that he was doing all in his power for the re-establishment

blishment of public tranquillity, and with that view had ordered certain general officers to put themselves at the head of the citizens who had taken arms at Paris.

This was thought evasive and unsatisfactory. A new deputation, at the head of which was the Archbishop of Paris, was almost instantly sent with the same request, founded on the confusions and alarms in the capital. To this the King replied, " You tear my heart more and more by the recital of the scenes at Paris. It is impossible that the orders I have given the troops can be the cause. I have no alteration to make to the answer I so lately gave you."

If the imprudence of those who directed the councils of Lewis XVI. was evident at the time when the States-General first assembled, as was attempted to be shewn, it must be admitted that his new counsellors seem in the present instance to have improved upon the imprudence of the old.

After

After it had been found impossible to resist the assembling of the States-General ; after a double representation had been granted to the Tiers-Etat ; after the voting by orders had been rejected, and the three orders had been melted down into one National Assembly ; after a numerous body of men had been formed into regiments and occupied the capital ; and after the troops of the line had betrayed symptoms of defection ;—to advise the King to give such an answer was foolish in the extreme, and exposing his authority to contempt and derision.

It was no doubt expected by those who had prevailed on the King to give this answer, that the army was ready to obey whatever orders they should receive from the Duke of Broglio and the other officers attached to the Court ; but to what extreme neglect must it have been owing, that a circumstance of this importance was not ascertained before the King was advised to act
and

and speak in this manner; and if the army *had* been ready to obey, when the citizens were prepared to resist, what scenes of bloodshed and slaughter must have been the consequence!—Scenes so revolting to the disposition of Lewis XVI. that he could not have persevered in countenancing them, even although he had thought them the only means of securing his crown.

Those therefore who are of opinion that such counsel would have been politic and wise to a prince of a different character, will still think it was injudiciously given to one who, although he might be prevailed on to adopt it through persuasion, was sure to relinquish it from principle and feeling, before it could produce the desired effect.

On the morning of the 15th it was decreed that another deputation should be sent to the King, with a remonstrance conceived in stronger terms than any of the preceding. The following sentiment was much applauded:

ed: *The French adore their King, but they are no longer inclined to be under the necessity of fearing him.*

An incident of the preceding day had given much offence. Among the troops cantoned in Versailles, a regiment of German hussars were encamped in the Orangerie of the Palace. The Queen, M. d'Artois, Madame de Polignac, and other persons of both sexes belonging to the court, had thought proper to walk into the Orangerie at this time, and were no doubt received by the troops with every demonstration of joy. These circumstances Mirabeau thought were of sufficient importance to be communicated to the King by the deputation. With all the exaggerations of eloquence, he desired them to inform his Majesty, “ *Que les hordes étrangères dont nous sommes investis ont reçu hier la visite des princes, des princesses, des favoris, des favorites, et leurs caresses, et leurs exhortations, et leurs présens.*

présens. Dites-lui, que toute la nuit les satellites étrangers, gorgés d'or et de vin, ont prédit dans leurs chants impies l'affervissement de la France, et que leurs vœux brutaux invoquoient la destruction de l'Assemblée Nationale. Dites-lui, que, dans son palais même, les courtisans ont mêlé leur danses au son de cette musique barbare, et que telle fut l'avant scène de la St. Barthelemy*.”

As this deputation were about to go out of the hall, they were prevented by the en-

* The bands of foreign troops by which we are surrounded were visited yesterday by the princes, the princesses, the favourites male and female of the Court, and were caressed by them, received presents from them, and were exhorted by them to perseverance. Tell the King, that those favoured mercenaries, inflamed with wine, predicted in their impious songs the subjugation of France, and with brutal fury invoked the destruction of the National Assembly. Tell him, that even in his palace the courtiers danced to that barbarous music; and remind him that scenes of the same nature were the harbingers of St. Bartholomew.

trance of the Duke of Liancourt. That nobleman had in the middle of the preceding night obtained an audience of his Majesty, and made such a representation of the state of Paris, and the dangers with which the Royal Family were threatened if a change of measures was not immediately adopted, as determined the King to order the troops to be withdrawn; and the Duke at the same time announced his Majesty's gracious intention of coming in person to the Assembly to give them this assurance.

The immediate effect of this news was a shout of joy. This natural demonstration of grateful sensibility was checked by one Deputy, whose conduct, it is probable, was more under the influence of a cool head than a warm heart. He observed that "such demonstrations of satisfaction formed a revolting contrast with the calamities which the people had already undergone; that to receive the King with severe and
 ferious

serious respect was more suitable to the sad posture of affairs; that the silence of the People often proved an useful lesson to Kings."

The discourse of this philosopher produced a temporary suppression of feeling and an affectation of formality. The King was received with the most profound silence, although the Deputies must have been struck at seeing him appear in a style so different from that in which they had been accustomed to view him, without pomp, almost without attendants, and in the plainest dress. Standing and uncovered, he addressed them in the most conciliatory terms, professing his sorrow for the disorders at Paris, his regard for the Assembly, and assuring them that the reports of any design on their personal liberty were calumnious. He ended by declaring that he had ordered the troops to remove from the neighbourhood of the capital.

This discourse was not heard to an end

without interruption. The emotion it produced was too powerful for the stern maxims above mentioned. Feeling overcame philosophy, and the hall resounded with shouts of applause.

When the King withdrew, all the Deputies (for this Assembly was not composed of such callous materials as the succeeding ones) —all the Deputies followed, and forming a respectful ring around his person attended him to the palace, in the balcony of which the Queen appeared with the Dauphin in her arms, whom she presented to the applauding multitude. An account of this agreeable alteration of affairs was sent to Paris. The Committee of Electors were permanently sitting in the Town-hall, forming the different corps of militia, and naming the officers. Having armed them in the best manner the present circumstances would permit, they gave them the name of National Guards, and appointed M. de la Fayette
6 their

their commander. M. Bailly was at the same time chosen Mayor of Paris, under which appellation he exercised the same functions that were formerly exercised under the title of *Prévôt des Marchands*, which was abolished.

A deputation of eighty-four of the most distinguished members of the National Assembly followed the accounts of the late events at Versailles to the metropolis. This deputation was met by the whole of the Parisian militia. The Deputies, having come out of their carriages at the *Barriere*, were conducted to the *Hotel de Ville*, amidst the acclamations of the citizens of both sexes, who, in the streets, from the windows and the tops of houses, hailed them as the saviours of their country.

The Dukes of Rochefoucault and Liancourt, M. Clermont-Tonnerre, Lally-Tolendal, and others, the most eminent members of this deputation, addressed the Com-

mittee in the Hotel de Ville in particular discourses, the tendency of which was to conciliate the minds of the citizens to the King, to place his late conduct in the least unfavourable point of view, and to assure them that his wishes were for the happiness of the people. “ Your good King,” said M. de Lally, “ has been deluded by calumny ; suspicions were instilled into his mind of that nation which he has the honour and happiness of governing : but we have unveiled the truth before his eyes ; he is sensible of having been deceived ; he has thrown himself into the arms of your National Assembly ; he puts his trust in them, or rather in you, and will henceforth be guided by their counsels, that is, by yours.

From the Hotel de Ville the Deputies were conducted to the church of Nôtre-Dame, where Te Deum was performed, in gratitude to the Supreme Being for the happy agreement between the King and the
National

National Representatives, and for the public prosperity which was expected to be the consequence.

The manifestations of joy were so universal, and their expressions of attachment to the King so warm, that a stranger who had entered Paris at that time would have thought it the most loyal town in Europe. For the eagerness with which the populace of all countries seize every event which fortuitously occurs, or is designedly held forth to them, as a cause of rejoicing, is often mistaken for a proof of their genuine satisfaction in that event. It should be remembered, however, that the multitude love noise and riot and acclamation and illumination, independent of any satisfaction in the event, or any love or regard for the General or Admiral, or popular Leader or Monarch, who serves as a pretext for their indulging their favourite passion. This seems to be common to the populace of all countries: what

distinguishes that of France is the wonderful rapidity with which they fly from the extremes of love to those of hatred, and from admiration to contempt, which makes them cry *Vive le Roi!* one day, with the same sincerity that they cry *Vive Petion!* another; and they accompany Egalité to the scaffold with as much exultation as they had before shewn in parading the busts of Orleans through the streets.

There is every reason to believe, that MM. Cazales, Mounier, Malouet, as well as the members of this deputation before mentioned, and others, had no other view in assisting in the Revolution than that of establishing monarchy on the basis of freedom, as the happiest government for their country. Such men of course must have felt satisfaction in observing the indications of returning royalty in the people; but there existed in the Assembly and in the Municipality of Paris men, at this time of no
note,

note, but who afterwards acted important parts, who viewed with an evil eye every indication of the nature above alluded to ; because they feared that a return of confidence in the King would tend to the diminishing, perhaps the annihilation, of their own rising importance. The immense influence of the capital with the Assembly probably first became apparent to them at this time, and was the ground work of the structure of ambition they afterwards built. Those men, therefore, were active in sowing new seeds of suspicion in the minds of the people ; they whispered that, notwithstanding the King's fair professions, fresh troops were on their march to Paris ; and they trumped up a story, that an attempt had been made to seize again upon the Bastille for the use of the King. They employed agents to excite the people to clamour for the recall of M. Necker, and succeeded so effectually that a deputation was sent on the 16th of July from
Paris

Paris to Versailles, the object of which was, that the Assembly should insist on the dismissal of the present Ministers and the recall of M. Necker.

A motion was made accordingly to that effect. In the debate which this occasioned, M. Mounier gave it as his opinion, that the National Assembly ought not to interfere in such appointments of the executive power, and produced the example of the Parliament of Great Britain, which he asserted had never interfered in the choice of the King's Ministers without the most ruinous consequences.

The reply which Mirabeau made to this argument is so remarkable, that I shall insert the following extract from his speech :
 “ S'il est une maxime impie et detestable, ce seroit celle qui interdiroit à l'Assemblée Nationale de declarer au Monarque que son peuple n'a point de confiance dans ses Ministres. Cette opinion attaque à la fois et
 la

la nature des choses, et les droits essentiels du Peuple, et la loi de la responsabilité des Ministres.

“ Eh ! comment nous refuseriez-vous ce simple droit de déclaration, vous qui nous accordez celui de les accuser, de les poursuivre, et de créer le tribunal qui devra punir ces artisans d'iniquités, dont, par une contradiction palpable, vous nous proposez de contempler les œuvres dans un respectueux silence ? Ne voyez-vous donc pas combien je fais aux Ministres un meilleur sort que vous, combien je suis plus modéré ? Vous n'admettez aucun intervalle entre un morne silence et une dénonciation sangui-naire. Se taire ou punir, obeir ou frapper, voilà votre système ! Et moi, j'avertis avant de dénoncer ; je récusé avant de flétrir ; j'offre une retraite à l'inconsidération ou à l'incapacité avant de les traiter de crimes. Qui de nous a plus de mesure et d'équité ?

“ Mais voyez la Grande-Bretagne ! Que
d'agi-

d'agitation populaire n'y occasionne pas ce droit que vous reclamez ! *C'est lui qui a perdu l'Angleterre*, dites vous—L'Angleterre est perdue ! Ah, Grand Dieu ! quelle sinistre nouvelle ! Eh ! par quelle latitude s'est-elle donc perdue ? Ou quel tremblement de terre, quelle convulsion de la nature a englouti cette île fameuse, cet inépuisable foyer de si grands exemples, cette terre classique des amis de la liberté ? Mais vous me rassurez : l'Angleterre fleurit encore pour l'éternelle instruction du monde ; l'Angleterre répare dans un glorieux silence les plaies qu'au milieu d'une fièvre ardente elle s'est faites ! L'Angleterre développe tous les genres d'industrie, exploite tous les filons de la prospérité humaine, et tout-à-l'heure encore elle vient de remplir une grande lacune de sa constitution avec toute la vigueur de la plus énergique jeunesse, et l'imposante maturité d'un peuple vieilli dans les affaires publiques. Vous ne pensiez donc qu'à quelques

quelques dissensions parlementaires (là comme ailleurs ce n'est souvent que du partage qui n'a d'autre importance que l'intérêt de la loquacité);—ou plutôt c'est apparemment la dernière dissolution du Parlement qui vous effraye ?

“ Qu'est-il arrivé, en effet, dans cette circonstance rare, où le Roi d'Angleterre, étayé d'une très-foible minorité, n'a pas craint de combattre la formidable Assemblée Nationale et de la dissoudre ? Soudain l'édifice phantastique d'une opposition colossale s'est écroulé sur ses frêles fondemens, sur cette coalition cupide et factieuse, qui sembloit menacer de tout envahir. Eh ! quelle est la cause d'un changement si subit ? C'est que le Peuple étoit de l'avis du Roi, et non de celui du Parlement. Le chef de la nation dompta l'aristocratie législative par un simple appel au Peuple—à ce Peuple qui n'a jamais qu'un intérêt, parce que le bien public est essentiellement le sien. Ses Représentans, revêtus
d'une

d'une invisible puissance, et presque d'une véritable dictature, quand ils sont les organes de la volonté générale, ne sont que des pigmées impuissans, s'ils osent substituer à leur mission sacrée des vues intéressées ou des passions particulières*."

It

* If there ever was an impious and detestable maxim, it would be that which precluded the National Assembly from declaring to the King, that his people placed no confidence in his Ministers. Such an opinion attacks at once the nature of things, the essential rights of the people, and the responsibility of Ministers.

But how can you refuse the simple right of such a declaration, after granting to us the right of accusing and prosecuting, and even of creating a tribunal for punishing those workers of iniquity, whose crimes, by a manifest contradiction, you desire us to contemplate in respectful silence? Do you not perceive then that I am more indulgent and moderate to the Ministers than you? You admit no interval between a gloomy silence and a sanguinary accusation: to be silent or to punish, to obey or to strike, that is your system. As for me, I am for warning previous to accusing; I object before I dis-

It was carried, that an address should be presented to the King, expressive of the wishes

honour ; I offer a retreat to inconsiderateness or incapacity before I treat them as crimes. Which of us has most moderation and equity ?

But we are desired to look at Great Britain. What disorders are produced there by this right which we wish to establish in France ! That right has ruined England—England is ruined, you say : ah ! Great God ! What dreadful news ! Where, or by what means is England destroyed ? By what earthquake or convulsion of nature has that famous island been swallowed up ? That abounding theatre of great actions, that classic ground of liberty. But you remove my fears : England still flourishes for the eternal instruction of the world ; England in a glorious tranquillity heals the wounds she had given herself during the delirium of a fever ! England develops every species of industry, traces every source of human prosperity, and very lately she has filled up a great gap in her Constitution with all the vigour and energy of youth, and all the maturity of a people long versed in politics. What—you only alluded to certain debates in Parliament, which there, as elsewhere, often arise from nothing but the mere
pleasure

wishes of the Assembly, that he would dismiss his present Ministers. This was rendered superfluous, by the resignation of the new Ministers ; and it was announced to the

pleasure of speaking ; or rather, perhaps, it is the last dissolution of Parliament which frightens you.

What happened in effect on that extraordinary occasion, when the King of England, supported by a feeble minority, was not afraid to resist that formidable National Assembly, and to dissolve it. Instantly the fantastic edifice of a colossal opposition was shaken from its feeble foundation, and that greedy and factious coalition, which threatened to carry all before it was crushed. And what was the cause of so sudden a change ? Because the People were of the King's opinion, and not of that of the Parliament. The head of the nation overcame that legislative aristocracy by a simple appeal to the People—that People who never can have but one interest, because the public good is essentially theirs. Those representatives, clothed with invisible, almost with dictatorial power, when they are the organs of the general will, are only a set of impotent pigmies, when they dare to substitute their own private interest and passions in the place of the true object of their sacred mission.

Assembly

Assembly at the same time that the King had written to M. Necker, inviting him to return.

The same deputation from the Electors at Paris to the National Assembly at Versailles, which had brought the request of the former to address the King on those subjects, conveyed also their opinion that a personal visit of the King to his faithful subjects in the capital would be highly acceptable, and perhaps the most expedient step he could possibly take in the present circumstances. This was no part of their public mission, but insinuated to the Deputies as their private sentiments, founded on the suspicions which still remained on the minds of the citizens of intended massacres, and which this mark of confidence from their Monarch would tend to efface.

When this was mentioned to the King, he resolved upon the measure, notwithstanding the consternation which it spread over

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his family, and the apprehensions which he himself entertained for his own life. The news of this resolution was sent to Paris in the middle of the night.

The King left Versailles on the morning of the 17th of July, with only one carriage besides that in which he was himself. He was attended by the Dukes of Villeroy and Vilquier, the Marshal Beauveau, the Count d'Estaing, and one or two other persons of the Court. The militia of Versailles accompanied the carriages to Séve, where they were met by M. La Fayette, at the head of a large body of National Guards; a party of cavalry headed the procession from Séve, followed by the French Guards with their cannon; a deputation of the National Assembly in their robes also attended, and were followed by the Parisian National Guards. The procession was slow, and to the King would be the more gloomy that he no more heard the ancient cry of *Vive le*

le Roi! whereas that of *Vive la Nation!* was incessantly screamed from all sides. That this did not happen by accident was evident; for men were heard admonishing the people, *Ne criez pas Vive le Roi.* There are many reasons for believing that the King's journey to Paris and his reception there were planned by a few who had influence in the Committee at Paris as well as in the Assembly, with a view to strike him with terror, and bend his spirit to an acquiescence in their future projects. It is not therefore surprising that he looked pale, melancholy, and with disquietude. He was met at the barrier by the Mayor, who presenting him with the keys of the city informed him that they were the identical keys which had been presented to Henry IV. observing at the same time, in language more quaint than flattering, that Henry had *re-conquered* his People, whereas in the present instance the People had *re-con-*

quered their King. He told the King also, what he might otherwise not have believed, that this was a very glorious day for the French Monarchy ; and added, what might have occurred to him without being told, that it was a day which it was not likely his Majesty would ever forget.—Whatever the King's thoughts were, he said nothing.

Finding himself equally embarrassed to answer all the fine speeches which were addressed to him on his arrival at the Hotel de Ville, his Majesty observed nearly the same silence there.

Indeed it was impossible for him to assent to all that was expressed or implied in the different harangues on this occasion. In one, the truth of the bloody designs against the city of Paris, of which the Court was accused, was strongly insinuated ; in another, it was proposed to raise a monument to Lewis XVI. as the overthrower of the Bastile, and the restorer of Liberty.

M. de

M. de Lally-Tolendal, who certainly was not of the number of those said to have planned the King's visit to Paris for the purpose above mentioned, expressed himself in language dictated equally by the spirit of loyalty and of freedom; observing " that the King himself was desirous that the Representatives of the Nation should share with him his authority, as he wished to reserve in his own hands no more than was necessary for the happiness of the People, and which their interest required should always belong to the Crown." And afterwards addressing the King, he said, " Il n'est pas ici un seul homme qui ne soit prêt à verser pour vous, *pour votre autorité légitime*, jusqu'à la dernière goutte de son sang*."

Unfortunately for the French nation, as

* There is not a single person here present, who is not ready to shed, for your Majesty and your legal authority, the very last drop of his blood.

well as for the Monarch, succeeding events have not confirmed what an ardent desire that it were the case prompted M. de Lally to assert.

M. Bailly, the Mayor, having presented the national cockade to the King, who appeared at the window with it attached to his hat, the populace in the square shouted; —the cry of *Vive le Roi!* was then heard for the first time that day, and resounded through the streets as the King returned from the Town-house to Versailles, where he was expected with fearful inquietude by the Queen and all his family.

The joy which the Parisians manifested after the King appeared with the national cockade, and their behaviour when he departed from Paris, have been thus described: “ Le départ du Roi fut un vrai triomphe. Les Parisiens étoient ivres de leur amour pour lui; sa voiture étoit entourée de citoyens de toutes les classes; les uns étoient derrière la carrosse,

carrosse, ceux-ci à la portière, d'autres sur le siège du cocher, il y en avoit jusques sur l'impériale *."

If the Parisians were intoxicated with love at this particular time, it must be acknowledged that they were intoxicated with rage soon after ; for it seems to be in their nature to be always intoxicated with something or other.

The members of the new Administration which had been so suddenly and imprudently formed, sensible of the quick transitions to which the French populace are liable, and by no means certain that they would be satisfied with their resignation, resolved to withdraw from the kingdom. The Count

* The Parisians were quite intoxicated with love for the King. His coach was surrounded with citizens of all classes ; some were mounted behind the coach ; some before and some on the coach box ; there were even a few on the very top.

d'Artois with his family, the Princes of Condé and of Conti, with many of the Nobility, did the same.

M. Foulon, who in the formation of the late Ministry had been placed in the War Department as an assistant to M. de Broglie, was not so fortunate as to escape out of France. Sensible of the people's prejudice against him, he kept himself concealed, and caused the report of his death to be spread abroad. He was discovered by the peasants while he was under hiding at a country-house near Paris. Some of the enemies of this unhappy man had circulated the incredible story, that he had often declared, that, if he should ever be Minister, he would make the people live on hay. The surest way of gaining the belief of the populace is to speak to their passions. This absurd expression was repeated by every mouth; and it kindled the more resentment in the
breasts

breasts of the rabble at this time, because many of them actually experienced hunger from the existing scarcity.

The cruelties which those peasants, and some of the populace of Paris, committed on M. Foulon and his son-in-law M. Berthier, in spite of all the efforts of the Mayor of Paris and the Commander of the National Guards to prevent them, are shocking to humanity, and disgusting to narrate.

M. de Fleffelles, at that time the chief Magistrate of Paris, was assassinated as he retired across the square from the Hotel de Ville. This murder was in consequence of a letter from him said to have been found in the pocket of De Launay. As the original letter never was produced, the report was probably a calumny invented by some enemy to destroy the man. For, at this period of anarchy, the credulity of the Parisians in giving belief to every calumny
however

however absurd, could only be equalled by their cruelty.

It was with difficulty that the wretched Invalides, who had been brought prisoners from the Bastile to the Town-house, were saved from the fury of the rabble, who wished to massacre them in cold blood in the square. They owed their preservation to the French foot guards, to whom the reduction of the Bastile was chiefly owing, and to M. Elie who led them on. Those brave men could not bear that their victory should be disgraced by such an act of cowardly cruelty, and requested of the multitude an amnesty to the prisoners as the most desirable reward they could receive for their own conduct.

It has been said, that the populace of Paris have become sanguinary and cruel by being familiarized to scenes of blood ; but the circumstances of wanton barbarity with
which

which the murders of Messrs. Foulon and Berthier were accompanied took place at the beginning of the Revolution, and they have not been surpassed by any that have happened since : indeed it is almost impossible they could.

It is well known, that profligacy and wickedness of every sort are pushed greater lengths in capitals, where vast numbers of mankind are assembled, than in the provinces. Paris has been long thought a place of greater profligacy than any other capital in Europe. At London the industry of the city serves as some check to the dissipation of Westminster. The other capital cities in Europe are smaller and poorer. Paris, although not so large nor so rich as London, was more luxurious ; because, on account of the universality of the French language, the general imitation of French manners, and other reasons, it was not only the capital of France but in some degree of all Europe,

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and was much more frequented by the rich and dissipated from every country than London ever was. At Paris, pleasure was not only to be had on easier terms, but was also served up more to the taste of foreigners in general than at London. There is a greater resort of industrious strangers to the latter, because of a more extensive field for industry ; but undoubtedly a greater number of gamesters, sharpers, and adventurers of every denomination, from the different countries of Europe, were to be found at Paris than in any other town in the world. Such men became the ready agents of those who had the most criminal views in the progress of the Revolution, and pushed the Parisians to a greater degree of violence against royalty than was shewn by the generality of the provinces ; although it is evident that the former had a greater interest in the preservation of it. The city of Paris owes its most admired ornaments, some peculiar rights,

rights, and a great part of its wealth, to the favour of the Monarchs and to the neighbourhood of the Court, and unquestionably will lose more by the continuation of the republican form of government than any part of France.

In the account of these excesses transmitted to the provinces, their cause was always assigned to a dreadful conspiracy against the National Assembly and the National Freedom, which had been carried on by the Court and a part of the Nobles. This account was industriously spread, and occasioned similar excesses in various provinces of France. Those of whom the Municipal Councils were composed being accused of favouring the old government, new Common Councils were appointed in many of the towns, consisting of men supposed to be of the most patriotic principles. The peasantry rose against certain unpopular Noblemen, burned their castles, obliged them to fly for their
5 lives,

lives, and a general rage against the Noblesse seemed to spread all over the kingdom.

This proceeded, no doubt, in a considerable degree from the inferior order of people becoming more and more licentious by impunity and the hopes of pillage ; but its becoming so universal forms a strong presumption also of a sense of oppression and ill usage received by the peasants from their lords.

It is most fervently to be hoped, that, in Great Britain, Government will always have sufficient energy to maintain the laws in force, and equally to protect the high from the seditious violence of the low, and the low from the insolent oppression of the high : but if, from whatever cause, this island were subjected to some political convulsion, and the populace excited against the higher orders of society, I am persuaded that the Nobility and Gentry of England,

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so far from being attacked with peculiar rancour by the peasantry of their own estates, would in general be protected and defended by them.

The yeomanry of England are a class of men, to which no other country has any thing exactly similar. The farmers of land love and respect the Country Gentlemen and Nobility of Great Britain, and have more reason to do so than the same set of men in any other nation. What is this owing to? In Great Britain popularity is of more consequence to a Gentleman or Nobleman than it was in France before the Revolution, or is at present in Germany and other European countries. There are many, no doubt, who would shew attention and hospitality to their neighbours in the lower ranks of life, from the mere sentiments of benevolence and generosity; but it has been observed, that nothing has more influence in keeping those sentiments alive in the bosoms

of the great, than their having something to ask or expect from the favour of the little. This is the case in England, at least once in seven years. The love and attachment of the county in which he lives is not only soothing to the heart, but also worthy of the ambition of the greatest Nobleman of Great Britain. It increases his political importance, whether he supports or opposes the measures of Administration. It is much to be feared, that those are apt to neglect and even despise the people, who think that they can do them neither good nor harm. The inferior orders in France had been long in this state of neglect and even contempt: when by the Revolution they found that this was no longer the case, they were so impatient to prove it, that they began by doing mischief to shew that they were now of some importance. Liberty would be a greater blessing to a people who have been long in servitude, if it could be given by degrees:

degrees: when it is obtained too suddenly, instead of being salutary, it is sometimes noxious—like victuals served up in profusion to men half famished, the consequence of which is often surfeit, and sometimes death.

CHAPTER XIII.

M. Necker is recalled—His triumphant Reception at Paris—recommends a general Amnesty—displeases the Sections—Some Members of the Assembly blame the conduct of M. Necker, who begins to lose his Popularity—Disorders all over France—The National Assembly greatly alarmed—Decrees of the fourth of August—The Duke of Rochefoucault—Sacrifices made by the Clergy.

M NECKER, who had left France in obedience to the King's order on the 11th of July, had passed by Bruffels, and arrived at Basle on his way to Coppet near Geneva. He there received the letters from the King and National Assembly, requesting his return to the situation he had just quitted in the Administration.

M. Necker

M. Necker has taken great pains to be considered by the world in the light of a Philosopher as well as a Minister of State. It is fortunate for Philosophers, that they can do pretty well without being Ministers of State; but it is very unfortunate for a Minister of State not to be somewhat of a Philosopher. It is probable that he will have frequent occasions for the exercise of philosophy during his administration, and he will stand in need of a great deal of it, in case he should be turned suddenly out of it. After the universal obsequiousness to which Ministers have been accustomed while in office, the wonderful alteration which they experience on their removal, however natural it may seem to the rest of the world, generally is so shocking to them, that instead of philosophers it is apt to make them misanthropes. There are, however, books in abundance in the library of every Minister, tending to shew the folly of ambition, the

inquietudes attending power, and how infinitely preferable a life of tranquillity and retirement is.

The love of power is perhaps more deeply rooted in the heart of man than any of his affections, and often survives them all: it is stronger than friendship; for we see even those who are counted honest men abandon their friends to enjoy it: it is stronger than hatred; for we see men connect themselves with their enemies for the same purpose. And we have been assured, that the friends of M. Necker endeavoured to confirm him in the resolution of retirement, by pointing out the danger of resuming his office among a people so unsettled and so liable to excesses as the French; but notwithstanding all the remonstrances of his friends, and all his own philosophy, instead of proceeding to Coppet, he determined to return to Paris.

The signs of esteem and attachment
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which were exhibited in every village and town through which he passed in his way from Basse to Paris, the transports of joy which the Parisians manifested, and their acclamations on his entering their city, with the very honourable reception he met with from the National Assembly, must have been peculiarly gratifying, and no doubt rendered him highly satisfied with his determination of returning; which, however, he soon after had much reason to repent. M. Necker has been accused of being too fond of the noisy applause of the multitude. The visit he made to the capital immediately after he had waited on the King and the National Assembly has been imputed by many to a desire of prolonging the pleasure he took in hearing his own praise. But even the enemies of M. Necker allow, that he is a man of distinguished humanity. His impatience to visit Paris, therefore, may naturally be assigned to the desire of saving the

life of M. Bezenval. As his intentions were known, he was waited for at the barrier by a multitude of the inhabitants; the streets and windows were crowded with admiring spectators; while his carriage was drawn to the Hotel de Ville, it was beheld with the same appearance of respect as the shrine of Genevieve, the tutelar saint of Paris, was formerly, when carried in procession through the streets. At the Hotel de Ville M. Necker was received by the Electors with every mark of profound respect; the populace from all parts of the city hurried to obtain a sight of the admired Minister. He was requested to appear at the balcony, to gratify the multitude which filled the Place de Greve; and to render their gratification complete, his wife and daughter had the goodness to appear with him, one on the right, the other on the left. What rendered this sublime spectacle entirely new, was, that a man and his wife were hardly ever
 seen

seen in public together at Paris. It required a revolution in the State, and all M. Necker's popularity, to prevent an exhibition so contrary to established manners from seeming ridiculous in the eyes of Parisians. So far from appearing ridiculous, M. Necker, although his wife was at his side, was beheld by the people in the square with the most enthusiastic admiration : His Holiness himself, when from the balcony of St. Peter's he pronounces his benediction on the adoring multitude beneath, was never more loudly and more perseveringly applauded.

After returning from the balcony to the hall, M. Necker's first care was to inform the Electors, that on his way to Paris having heard that Baron de Bezenval, commander of the Swiss guards, had been arrested by the militia of Villenaux, he had written in the Baron's favour to the municipal officers of that town ; but they had delayed setting him at liberty without an

order from the permanent committee of the Hotel de Ville.

After relating those particulars, M. Necker gave the most honourable testimony regarding the character of M. Bezenval; representing how unjust it would appear in the eyes of all Europe to detain a meritorious officer as a prisoner, when he was on his way home by the leave of the King; and entreated, that orders might be immediately sent for releasing him. Perceiving that his proposal was approved of, and that the audience were in a cheerful and humane disposition, he proceeded in a pathetic and eloquent manner to lament the disorders which had already taken place, and to recommend a general amnesty as the surest means of restoring tranquillity, and infinitely the greatest mark of regard which could be shewn to himself.

M. Necker's discourse was heard with rapture. Orders were sent for the release of M. Bezenval, and a general amnesty was

decreed, *par acclamation*, by the General Assembly of the Electors.

M. Necker has been much censured for this part of his conduct. It has been said, that the granting of pardon, whether general or particular, legally belonged to the King, and that to apply elsewhere to obtain it was affrontive to his authority. The answer to this is, that the King at this period had no authority.

It has been also said, that he ought to have made this application to the National Assembly, as the next existing power which could with any appearance of lawful authority grant pardon or indemnity. The answer to this second objection is, that M. Necker plainly saw that the Assembly were at that time overawed by the decided and active measures which had been taken by the Electors, and durst not then interfere; whereas the Assembly of Electors having manifested the plenitude of their power in so
many

many instances, he was eager to make it subservient in this instance to the cause of humanity and mercy ; and it is to the honour of M. Necker, that when he saw that the interesting objects he had in view were not to be obtained by regular means, he tried those means which he thought would succeed, without regarding whether they were regular or not.

There were those present in the Hotel de Ville, who did not partake of the humane enthusiasm, were enemies of M. Necker, and who immediately dispersed themselves among the districts, making an outcry against the Council at the Hotel de Ville for having ordered the release of Bezenval, and for daring to send a proclamation for general pardon and peace round to the different municipalities. They attributed the proposal of M. Necker to an inclination to regain the favour of the Court, and of all the conspirators against national freedom.

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The agitation of the districts was so sudden, and the popular fury became so violent, that the Council at the Hotel de Ville retracted their measures; and the Committee of Electors, which had been enabled to form an army of the turbulent citizens, sufficient to keep in check the regular troops which encircled Paris, and to storm the Bastile, found itself unable to maintain one illegal act of humanity and compassion.

One of the districts was so much afraid that M. Bezenval would be set free in consequence of the first order of the Electors, that they sent deputies to prevent it; and other districts sent a deputation to the National Assembly to complain of the conduct of the Electors, and to warn the Assembly against giving a sanction to it.

The National Assembly were well pleased to check the power of the Assembly of Electors, and would have been equally pleased to have been able to oppose that of those

which succeeded them in the capital, namely, that body which was called the Representative Body of the Commons of Paris; but the latter they durst not venture to touch.

Messrs. Mounier, Lally-Tolendal, Malouet, and others, men of probity, regretting that the act of the Electors had ever been called into question, were for declaring the general principle, that, without any regard to popular clamours, no person should be arrested without a positive accusation, and that Bezenval should be directly set at liberty.

Mirabeau, who knew that the release of M. Bezenval and the indemnity had been granted by the Electors to the general esteem for M. Necker, and in consequence of an eloquent and pathetic discourse pronounced by him at the Town-house, opposed the release of M. Bezenval and the decree of amnesty. His motive is generally attributed to jealousy of M. Necker's popularity, and
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a strong inclination to render him suspected by or indifferent to the people ; in which he soon after succeeded. “ Nous-mêmes n’avons pas le droit de prononcer une amnistie,” said he. “ Le pouvoir de faire grace, tant qu’il existe, réside éminemment dans la personne du Monarque : je dis, tant qu’il existe ; parce que c’est une grande question que de déterminer si ce pouvoir de faire grace peut exister, dans quelles mains il résidera s’il existe, et si les crimes contre les nations devroient jamais être remis, &c.*”

Mirabeau was not naturally an inhuman or blood-thirsty man : but on this occasion

* We ourselves have not the right to pronounce an amnesty : the power of pardoning, while it shall exist, belongs to the King alone : I say, while it shall exist ; because it is a matter of great importance to decide, whether this power of pardoning ought to exist, in whose hands it ought to be placed if allowed to exist, and whether crimes against nations ought ever to be forgiven.

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he shewed himself a man of violent passions and of unjustifiable resentment ; for in all probability it was merely to mortify one who had neglected him, and of whose popularity he was jealous, that he spoke against the pardon of a man he could not think guilty of any crime, and against a general indemnity, which, whether properly ordered or not, he knew to be highly expedient.

Roberspierre, who was little known at this period, betrayed somewhat of that cruel and unrelenting spirit which since has spread such dread and horror all over France, by speaking on this occasion against pardon or amnesty. He seems also to have seized some of the hints thrown out by Mirabeau, and to have made use of them long afterwards as the foundation of part of his reasoning in the process against the King.

The Assembly determined that a Committee should be appointed to examine into the accusations ; but being sensible, that, if

M. Bezenval

M. Bezenval were conducted to Paris, all their authority could not protect him from the rage of the populace, they ordered that he should be carried to a castle of some strength near the place where he had been arrested, and there guarded till his trial.

Thus the earnest wishes of M. Necker were crossed and defeated when he seemed to be at the height of popularity, by the very people of whose applause he was so fond ; and he had now reason to be convinced, that, whatever their regard and admiration of him might be, their thirst of blood, and rancour against those whom they considered as their enemies, was stronger. Any pleasure which he may have derived from the contemplation that he possessed the affection of such people, must have been mightily diminished after he made this discovery.

In his letter to the Secretary of the Common Council of Paris, who first informed him of the sudden turn which had happened,

pened, M. Necker expresses himself in the following words : “ J’ai reçu la *triste* nouvelle que vous m’avez fait l’honneur de me communiquer. J’en rendrai compte au Roi. *Mon bonheur n’a guère duré* *.”

What shews of how very little importance the King was already become in the eyes of all parties is, that the mention made of him in this letter is the only notice that seems to have been taken of him in this whole transaction. An officer is arrested by the militia of a provincial town, as he is on his way to his native country: the King’s Minister, returning at the call of the Nation to the capital, declares that the officer had his Majesty’s permission, and requires of the municipality to allow him to proceed: they refuse until they shall receive orders

* I have received the sad news you did me the honour to transmit to me. I shall communicate them to the King. My happiness has not been of long duration.

from

from a Committee at Paris : the Minister afterwards applies for the same purpose to this Committee : but no more notice is taken of the King, than if he had not been in existence.

In fact, the King was already deprived of all authority, and what he had afterwards was no longer considered as an essential prerogative of the Crown, but a gift of the National Assembly. And it soon afterwards appeared, that the Assembly were not able to maintain him even in the exercise of that share of power which they placed in his hands : for when, instead of an absolute veto on their decrees, the National Assembly resolved that the King should only have a suspending one, it was found that he could not make use of it without raising a violent clamour, and exposing himself and his family to the outrages of the mob.

The vindictive disposition and excesses of the Parisian populace were to be regretted

not only on account of their effects at Paris, but also on account of the example thereby given to the lower orders, and particularly the tenants of land, and the peasantry, all over France, among whom great disorders continued after some appearance of regularity had taken place in the capital. It will be naturally imagined, that many took advantage of the general confused state of the country, and made it a pretence for refusing to pay the taxes to Government, and even the rents due to their landlords. Complaints of this were frequently made to the Assembly, who thought proper to refer them to a Committee, which was directed to make a report and suggest a remedy for so dangerous an evil.

The remedy which the Committee recommended was, that the Assembly should publish a solemn *Declaration* of their entirely disapproving of the unlawful practice of refusing to pay taxes and rents, and advising

all persons concerned to pay them regularly for the future. It is surprising that this Committee, when they were recommending such efficacious means for putting a stop to unlawful practices, did not recommend at the same time a solemn proclamation against the unlawful practice of fornication, which is of still longer standing, and had as good a chance of being put an end to by a proclamation.

It would appear that the measure adopted had entirely failed ; for while the National Assembly were occupied at Versailles in framing that bill of rights which they intended as the foundation of their new Constitution, accounts came from all quarters, that the spirit of revolt seemed to increase instead of diminishing in the provinces ; that to a refusal of paying taxes and rents many instances of pillaging, robbery, and house-breaking, were added ; that the Nobility in particular were exposed to these

depredations; that many of their family seats had been plundered and demolished, and in some cases their wives and children abused and insulted in the grossest manner. As almost all the proprietors of land in the Assembly, and the other most respectable Deputies, received accounts to the same effect, they made a deep impression and spread a great alarm. Many letters of this nature were received on the fourth of August. When the Assembly met in the evening, strong symptoms of vexation, anxiety, and terror, were visible in the countenances of the members, particularly those belonging to the two first orders, who seemed now convinced of the necessity of uniting without reserve with the third, as the only means of preserving their property and securing their families from insult.

The extraordinary impressions with which the Deputies were so severely and so suddenly affected, produced consequences as

extraordinary and as sudden. While every one seemed engrossed with his own feelings, and waited to hear what might be proposed by some other, the Viscount de Noailles opened the scene by asserting, that the people were driven to those excesses by the accumulation and weight of the burdens under which they laboured; that they were become desperate by the exaction of taxes which they could not pay, and feudal services above their strength; that it was now become as necessary for the safety of the rich as for the relief of the poor, that many sources of oppression should be immediately abolished, lest the country people should proceed farther lengths than they had hitherto done, and take upon themselves the task of doing themselves justice. He then enlarged on the glory which the Nobility would derive from sacrificing private interest and importance to the public good; and concluded by moving, that those sources of tyranny and

injustice should be abolished ; that all public charges should be equally supported by the whole community, and all taxes levied in proportion to the income of each individual ; that all feudal claims should be redeemable at a fair valuation ; that *corvées*, and all rights of the lords to the personal services of the peasantry, should be entirely abolished, and other grievances, under which the people suffered, alleviated.

The Viscount de Noailles' motion was seconded by the Duke d'Aiguillon, who made another tending to the same purpose, which created more surprise than the former, on account of the Duke's ample estate and extensive royalties, which rendered his sacrifices greater, although his patriotism was perhaps only equal to that of the Viscount.

When certain ancient feudal claims, which are indecent in themselves, and degrading to humanity, were begun to be enumerated, a cry of horror burst from the audience, and
prevented

prevented the Deputy from proceeding. This circumstance, however, increased the enthusiasm for reformation which animated the Assembly. And the bright examples of the noble Viscount and Duke above mentioned, joined to the thundering applause with which their proposals were heard, excited great emulation. The virtues of self-denial and patriotism became so precious in the eyes of some who had never before seemed to put any great value upon them, that hardly any sacrifice was thought too dear for the purchase of even the reputation of possessing them, which was bid for on this occasion, like a valuable statue or picture at an auction, with an ardour which drew fresh applause, excited fresh emulation, and made the Nobles outbid each other in a manner that astonished the galleries, and delighted the Commons, who, having no sacrifices to make, could not enter into the competition.

Some of the Nobles, however, were provoked at certain sacrifices which affected themselves more than the proposers, and in revenge they moved for different sacrifices which affected the others more than themselves. This kind of retaliation is not unnatural to lofty minds, if Homer was a judge of nature : “ If I am to be deprived of my mistress,” said Agamemnon to Achilles, “ you shall be deprived of yours also.” In what other particulars the Nobles in question resembled the Greek heroes, I know not ; but it is said that to the heat raised by this collision of emulation, patriotism, and revenge, the heat and expansion of heart produced by wine were added—so that on the whole more was obtained for the people at this one sitting after dinner, than the most sanguine reformer had expected in many days.

The Deputies of certain provinces which enjoyed peculiar privileges, took upon themselves, without instructions from their constituents,

stituents, to propose, that the charters and franchises of these provinces should be added to the sacrifices of this memorable night.

The Clergy had hitherto remained astonished and silent spectators of a scene so awful and unexpected ; and a motion having been made to put an end to the meeting, the President was proceeding accordingly, when suddenly he made a pause, and reproached himself for want of attention in being about “ prematurely to close the meeting before any of the venerable body of the Clergy, ever sympathising with the distresses of the people, had declared their sentiments on so interesting a subject.”

There was no evading this apostrophe. The Bishops of Nancy and Chartres spoke in the name of their brethren. The first not only approved of a motion which had been made that the feudal rights, and all other jurisdictions of lords of manors established in the same manner, should be abolished ;

abolished ; but he proposed besides, that the price of the ransom of ecclesiastical feudalities should be applied to the relief of the poorer part of the ecclesiastical body, and not to the profit of the actual incumbent.

The Bishop of Chartres, after insisting on the injustice of the game laws, and painting in glowing colours the cruelty of obliging the poor farmer to be the passive witness of ravages on his property, proposed the suppression of those laws and all the pretended rights of the chace.

The exclusive rights of fisheries, to warrens, and to dovecots, all of which considerably affected the revenue of the Clergy, were also abolished ; and some Dignitaries of the Church, who possessed more benefices than one, declared that they were resolved to limit themselves to a single one.

The Duke de la Rochefoucault, who was a friend to liberty and had promoted the Revolution, was however no republican, but a
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well-wisher to monarchy, and personally attached to the King, took this opportunity of doing honour to the Monarch he loved, by reminding the Assembly that his Majesty had anticipated one of their decrees, by having already given freedom to all the serfs in his own demesnes; and the Duke at the same time did honour to his own heart, by expressing a wish that before the end of the sessions the Assembly would take into consideration the deplorable condition of the Negroes in their colonies.

How came this enthusiastic friend of freedom to prefer a monarchical form of government to a republican? Not surely for the sake of the monarch or his family. Were it even clear that royalty conveyed happiness, he could not have preferred the happiness of a single family to that of the millions who inhabit France. No; it must have been from a conviction that a well regulated hereditary monarchy would be more
conducive

conducive to the happiness of those millions than a republic. The proofs which experience has afforded of the truth of that opinion are the only right which Kings have to their crowns; a good King would not wish for a stronger; a wise one could hardly believe they ever had any other.

It would have been fortunate for the French nation, that they had adhered to this opinion of the Duke de Rochefoucault. They have thought otherwise; it is their affair. Perhaps they may come of themselves to alter their way of thinking on that subject; which is certainly most likely to happen when no attempt is made to force them to it; but should *they* endeavour to turn monarchies into republics, or should monarchies endeavour to force republics to assume a monarchical form of government, there can be no tranquillity or happiness in Europe. If indeed it had been usual for the different nations of Europe to manifest a dis-

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interested regard for the prosperity of each other ; if there were many proofs recorded in history, that, so far from taking advantage of the accidental distresses or calamities in which any of them were involved, the others had shewn a readiness to relieve their unfortunate neighbours, and to extricate them from their difficulties ; then indeed the case would be different : but as there are not many instances of this nature on record, it is not surprising that the French should not consider the hints they have received from their neighbours to renounce the republican and resume their old form of government, as proofs of good will, or that they hesitate a little before they determine to take them.

To return to the National Assembly :—
In commemoration of the sacrifices made, this famous sitting concluded with a decree conferring the title of Restorer of French Liberty on the King ; and a deputation was appointed to inform him of this, and to re-
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quest his presence at a Te Deum to be celebrated throughout the kingdom; which ceremony was performed accordingly, attended by the King and the whole Assembly.

The Third Order were so expressive of their admiration of the generosity and self-denial that appeared in the conduct of the Nobility and Clergy, that it might have been expected they would have tried to check an enthusiasm which, if carried farther, might prove too injurious to those two orders; and this was the more to be expected from men of candour and equity, as most of the Deputies of the Tiers-Etat could not imitate the other two orders in making such sacrifices, and were little affected, in point of interest, by those which had been proposed.

It appears, however, that the Commons did not labour under any delicate distress of this kind; for the Committee appointed to reduce the various proposals that had
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been made into the form of a law, included the tithes as a feudal vassalage or tax levied on the lands, which had never entered into the minds of the Clergy, who considered ecclesiastical tithes as a rent-charge for the maintenance of the Church, for which a proper allowance had been made to the actual proprietors in the purchase of their estates; and therefore they imagined that the Legislature could not without injustice transfer this from them, whose property it was, to the landlords, who had no claim to it. This article being strongly and justly objected to, produced several warm debates, in which the Abbé Sieyes made the most conspicuous figure, defending the rights of the Church, and proving the injustice of stripping the Clergy in this arbitrary manner. The Abbé was not listened to on this occasion with that attention which had been usually paid to him, and which the strength of

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of his reasoning deserved. He pleaded the cause of the Church on the principles of plain good sense and equity, without calling the assistance of sophistry, or giving the least hint of the divine right of tithes. Had the Abbé been inclined to make use of them, he knew that no arguments derived from superstition could have weight with his present audience; he found that those founded on justice had as little.

The impatience of the audience during the Abbé's reasoning did not arise from any eagerness to answer his arguments; it was the impatience which men predetermined to be unjust feel on hearing their injustice made manifest. He concluded one of his speeches by observing, that "if they wished to be *free*, they should begin by being *just*."

A country vicar, perceiving that the unanswerable discourses of the Abbé produced

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no effect, with great vehemence addressed the Commons in these words : “ Was it to plunder us that you invited us to join you in the name of the *God of Peace* ? ”

The Nobles were as unrelenting as the Commons. They seemed to have been actuated in some degree by resentment against the Clergy for having abandoned them on the important question of the manner of voting ; and the ungrateful return which the Clergy now met with from the Commons, it is probable, was more sensibly felt by them than the retaliation of the Nobles. But the Nobles acted very unwisely in indulging their resentment in this manner. Many of the greatest mischiefs in society spring from the secret satisfaction which one class of men sometimes take, or the indifference at least which they feel when the rights of another class is attacked ; without considering, that the moment a law is passed which

is oppressive on any set of men, a source of oppression is opened against every set of men. Even those, therefore, who respect no man's rights but their own, are strongly interested to forget private resentment, and to defend the rights of all their neighbours.

The coolest heads among the Clergy, perceiving that the Nobles and Commons were united against them, and thinking that longer resistance would only serve to irritate those on whom they and their brethren must at last rely for support, determined to submit with the best grace they could.

The Archbishop of Paris, when the contest was at the warmest and the noise at the height, arose and declared in the name of his brethren, that their only anxiety was that divine worship might continue to be celebrated with dignity; that the gospel might be preached by virtuous and well instructed

structed clergymen ; that the poor might be relieved and succoured ; and should these purposes be effected, that they would resign the whole of their tithes into the hands of the nation, and for their own future support trust entirely to the justice of their country.

As the Archbishop continued his discourse, and the purport of it opened upon the audience, the blustering of the contest which had so long prevailed in the hall gradually abated, and the noise at last subsided into a general whisper of satisfaction, as a storm subsides at the appearance of the twin stars—

Defluit saxi agitatus humor ;
 Concidunt venti, fugiuntque nubes,
 Et minax ————— ponto
 Unda recumbit.

Some of the people in the galleries, after remaining a few moments silent and motionless, clapped their hands in applause of

the great sacrifice which the Clergy had offered ; but the generality of the Assembly, considering it as a constrained and not a free-will offering, while they rejoiced at the sacrifice, derided the sacrificers.

CHAPTER XIV.

Reflections on the Cruelty to which the Clergy were subjected—On the Power to be given to the King—The Project of two Chambers—The Galleries of the National Assembly—Manœuvres respecting the Audience—A Feast given by the Gardes-du-Corps to the Regiment of Flanders at Versailles—The National Assembly displeased with the King's Answer to their Address—The Transactions of the Entertainment misrepresented—Insurrection at Paris—M. La Fayette endeavours to quell it, without Effect—The first Conductors of the Revolution justified—M. La Fayette marches with 20,000 Men to Versailles.

THE National Assembly have treated the Clergy of France something in the same cruel manner that the Roman

Senate behaved in the third Punic war to the Carthaginians.

When the Carthaginians heard of the hostile preparations of the Romans, conscious of their own weakness, they declared themselves willing to submit to the discretion of the Roman people, and to the terms of peace they should exact. The Senate applauded their prudence, and required hostages as pledges of their fidelity. The hostages were sent. The Roman Consul, who was at Utica with his army, then required, in the name of the Senate, that the Carthaginians should deliver up their arms and warlike stores; such things being useless to a people now under the protection of the Roman republic. The Magistrates of Carthage were shocked at the rigour of this demand: after some hesitation, however, they acquiesced, saying they had an unbounded confidence in the justice of the Senate. The Consul, after highly praising their conduct,

conduct, informed them that they must abandon Carthage, which it was the pleasure of the Senate should be destroyed.

With similar perfidy the Clergy of France were allured to join in the Revolution, to make many sacrifices in the hopes of being protected in the possession of what remained, and then obliged to rely on the justice of the Assembly, which stripped them of the whole, except on conditions which their consciences prevented many of them from agreeing to. This refusal being represented as a crime, the unhappy Clergy have at various periods been persecuted and massacred, all over the nation. The most striking difference between the cases is, that those whom the Romans treated in this perfidious and cruel manner had been for ages their ancient and inveterate enemies; whereas those whom the National Assembly treated thus unjustly were their own countrymen, and that part of their countrymen whose

peculiar duty it was to teach benevolence and good will towards mankind.

One of the most important questions that was agitated by the National Assembly, while they were employed in forming the Constitution, regarded the degree of power to be placed in the hands of the King, and particularly whether his consent should be made necessary for giving the force of law to the decrees of the Assembly. The Latin word *veto*, of which the Tribunes of the Roman People made use when they gave a negative to a law, was adopted on this occasion to express the King's negative. The debates on this subject continued from the end of August till the middle of September, were carried on with extraordinary heat, and created a division in the Assembly, which has continued through subsequent legislatures with augmenting hatred.

On this matter there were three opinions.

1. That the decrees of the Assembly should

should be law, without any sanction from the King.

2. That the King should have an absolute negative on all decrees.

3. That the King's negative should not be absolute, but only suspensive.

During the debates on this subject it appeared, that the majority of the members were so apprehensive of a return of the old tyranny, that they overlooked many other dangers. They were so solicitous to secure the legislative power from the attempts of the executive, that they seem to have forgotten that it was a monarchical constitution which they had professed to establish; and weakened the executive power to such a degree as almost to render it useless;—the consequence of which has been, that, in the progress of the Revolution, the Assembly itself has been insulted in the grossest manner, and the monarchy overturned.

Mirabeau, who wished to preserve the
monarchy

monarchy while he laboured to give freedom to his country, endeavoured to shew, that giving an absolute veto to the King tended to both those purposes; that it would prove a check also to crude and précipitate decrees, and might on some future occasion prevent an ambitious majority from tyrannizing over, perhaps expelling, the members who opposed them, and forming at last an odious and despotic aristocracy with the name of a republic.

All Mirabeau's eloquence in support of the absolute veto proved ineffectual within the Assembly; and without doors the prejudice against it was still greater. The open and unrestrained discussion of a political question was still a new enjoyment in France, and on the present occasion was pursued with all that ardour which new pleasures generally excite in that country. Very few understood what the word meant, or ever troubled themselves to enquire; yet

men, women, and children, although according to the custom of the country eternally speaking, spoke of nothing, during several weeks, but the veto. In the same manner as some years ago, when the whole nation took a fancy to be eternally singing, they sang no other song but Malbrouck. To harangue against the veto in public places became a mark of patriotism; lists of the members who spoke in its favour were handed about, and all those whose names were in the lists were execrated as traitors. In short, upon this as on many other occasions during the Revolution, a violent storm was raised, and furious spirits rode in the whirlwind and directed it.

The most judicious as well as the most eloquent members were for giving the King an absolute negative on the decrees of the Assembly. The majority, however, were so much intimidated by the clamours without doors, that they adopted the suspensive veto ;

veto ; decreeing that it should continue in force for two successive legislatures ; but, if the third should approve of the suspended decree, it should then become a law without the royal sanction.

This measure, which was recommended by Necker and is praised by Rabaud de Saint Etienne, did not satisfy the King, and was still more displeasing to the people, who perceived little or no difference between this and the absolute veto. Mirabeau shewed more profound political knowledge than M. Necker or Rabaud, by placing himself among those who supported it ; and at the same time he gave a proof that his love of popularity could not in a point so material make him act contrary to his opinion. The idea, that giving to the King an absolute veto on the acts of the Assembly would gradually bring back the old despotism was what influenced the Deputies who opposed it. Mirabeau saw that other articles
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in the Constitution would prevent such an effect, and that the spirit of the times alone rendered it almost impossible. He probably also foresaw, that the suspensive veto would become a continual cause of jealousy and discord between the King and the Assembly. But even if this prerogative, which seems to have been highly necessary, had been established in the Constitution, still a prudent Minister would not have advised the King to make use of it, until the jealousies of the people were dissipated, and the government regularly formed; and perhaps not even then, unless it was evident that the Monarch, in giving his negative to a decree of the Assembly, had a respectable minority of the Assembly, and a very decided majority of the People at large, of his opinion. With all these precautions, the veto in particular instances might still be erroneously given: the King, the minority of the Assembly, and the majority of the Public, might be in the

wrong,

wrong, and the majority of the Assembly in the right : yet if the King's negative were never used except in such circumstances, it never could create jealousy of the power of the Crown on the one hand, or fears for the freedom of the Nation on the other.

The suspensive veto became, soon after the King's acceptance of the Constitution, an object of jealousy, and was no sooner made use of than it became the cause, or was made the pretext, of the most fatal discord.

The next important subject of debate happened in consequence of a proposal made by M. de Lally-Tolendal in the name of the Commission of Constitution, that the Legislature should consist of a lower and upper house. According to the first idea, the upper house was to be composed of members chosen for life. M. Mounier preferred their being chosen for seven years.

Those who had opposed the veto were as violent against the two chambers or houses.

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They dreaded that the influence of the Court would at some time or other form the upper house of the higher Nobility, and render it hereditary. They endeavoured to ridicule the idea of a balance of power in the various branches of the Legislature; and, shutting their eyes to all the advantages of the British Constitution, they declaimed against its abuses. Yet, if two houses have been found beneficial in the British Legislature, and if two chambers of representatives have been of use in the American, by affording time for reflection before decrees are finally passed; so far from opposing their introduction, it might have been expected of those members who were best acquainted with the characters of Frenchmen, that, instead of two chambers, they would have tried to establish three in the new Constitution of France: but two at least were highly necessary, as they would not only have been of service in preventing

intemperate

intemperate decisions and indigested decrees, but in precluding in a great measure, if not altogether, the necessity of the King's having recourse to his veto.

Perhaps this proposal of the two chambers might have been carried, had it not met with strong opposition from a quarter where it was least expected ; for many of the Nobles themselves were against an upper chamber ; and for various reasons, arising, as was suspected, from their different situations and views. From the superabundant Noblesse of France, only a small portion could be chosen to form an upper chamber. Many of those who saw but little probability of their being of the number, could not bear that others, whom they considered on a level with, or perhaps inferior, to themselves, but who had a better chance of being placed in the upper chamber, should obtain that advantage over them ; and therefore were against the measure. Some imagined that

the forty-seven members who had first joined the Tiers-Etat would be first promoted ; and it filled them with indignation to think that men whom they looked on as little better than traitors, many of them of the lowest class of Noblesse, should, as a reward for betraying its cause, be placed at the head of the order. It is also believed, that the proposal of two chambers was opposed by some of the higher orders who were enemies to the Revolution in any form, and thought that such a regulation would give stability to it, and prevent that discord, precipitancy, and anarchy, of which they saw the seeds in the present Assembly, and from which they augured its speedy overthrow, and the restoration of a government more to their taste.

The project of the two chambers being disliked by the public in general, and considered by many of the Deputies of the Third Order as a plan calculated for raising a favoured portion of the Noblesse above the

other members of the National Assembly, and forming a new and more important species of Peerage; and as it was not supported by the whole body of the Noblesse themselves, and opposed by several of them, it is not surprising that the motion was lost by a great majority.

The notion that an Upper Chamber, by creating a more important species of aristocracy though less numerous than what existed formerly in France, would have proved destructive to freedom, seems erroneous; but the objection might have been easily obviated, by electing the Upper Chamber not from the Noblesse alone, but promiscuously from the general body of Deputies without regard to birth; to be continued, according to M. Mounier's proposal, only for seven years, or some other limited term; to consist of not more than a fourth or fifth of the general Assembly of Representatives, and of members of a more advanced age than was requisite for being chosen of the Lower Assembly.

Assembly. This, or some contrivance to produce delay and re-consideration, was assuredly highly requisite in a numerous assembly of *Frenchmen*, most of them inexperienced in political science, novices in the business of legislation, impetuous, and enthusiastic. To the want of some salutary check of this nature much of the mischief and misery that has befallen France, and some perhaps of what through her means has befallen her neighbours, may be ascribed. Another circumstance from which she has greatly suffered, has been the permitting the people in the galleries of the National Assembly to manifest their approbation or disapprobation of the speakers in the noisy and insulting manner they sometimes do.

At the first assembling of the States-General, the curiosity of the public to hear the debates was prodigious; and the Tiers-Etat, who of themselves first formed the National

Assembly, soon perceived the advantage which resulted to them from the presence of a numerous auditory in the galleries. They were not always sure of having the argument, but they were absolutely certain of having the galleries, on their side.

At the beginning the audience ventured to *applaud* only; and as many members spoke more for the purpose of drawing a little applause than any other, the presence of strangers was rather agreeable than otherwise. But the strangers soon took the liberty of giving the most noisy proofs of their disapprobation as well as of their satisfaction. This was complained of by several members, but never remedied; and it was assumed as a right which belonged to the public, that as many of the people as the galleries could contain might always sit there. This right was supported by several of the Deputies, and still more strenuously by the people themselves.

While

While the National Assembly remained at Versailles, the audience was not able fully to establish these claims. It was not until some time after the Assembly was removed to the capital that they were exercised in their utmost latitude. Then indeed the audience became the arbiters of praise and censure; and the Galleries of the National Assembly were considered as the *Nation*, as much as the Pit at a London playhouse is considered as the *Town*. The performers at both *Theatres* are no doubt much at the mercy of the audience—with this difference, however, that although what the British actor pronounces is liable to be damned, yet he himself is in no danger of being abused and insulted by the mob when he appears in the streets, as often happened to the unpopular orators of the National Assembly.

In the progress of improvement, the French audience were not left to their own

unbiaſſed judgment, but inſtructed what kind of doctrine they were to applaud, and what they were to condemn.

As a matter of curioſity, it may not be improper to give ſome account of a man-œuvre which was of ſo much importance in the Revolution, and which I received from thoſe who were fully acquainted with the manner in which the galleries were diſciplined, at the period when that kind of tactic was brought to the greateſt perfection ; and that there may be no need of returning to the ſubject, I ſhall inſert it here, though not the precise part of this narrative in which, according to method, it ſhould be placed.

The galleries of the National Aſſembly being open to people of every deſcription, and filled by the firſt comers, it will be readily believed that, in a city ſuch as Paris, nine-tenths of the audience were incapable of underſtanding the debates. Thoſe parts
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of the speeches, therefore, which they most admired, and at which they thundered their loudest peals of applause, were not precisely what Longinus or Mr. Burke would have selected as examples of the sublime or beautiful. Every speaker, who had not the misfortune of being thought a royalist, who had a tolerably strong voice, who interspersed his discourse with abuse of Aristocrates, Emigrants, and Sovereign Princes; who made frequent allusion to the Sovereignty of the People; and who, no matter how they were introduced, often pronounced with emphasis the words *La Nation*, *Liberté*, and *Egalité*, was certain of the applause of the galleries.

Certain Deputies of the Court party having remarked the efficacy of these words, sometimes had the address to intermingle them so successfully with their harangues, as to draw loud applause from those who, if they had comprehended the tendency of the

reasoning, would have hissed them without mercy.

As the audience were so apt to be misled by their *ears*, it was thought proper to engage their *eyes* as an auxiliary to their understanding; and men were employed to throw out signals indicating whom and when they should applaud or censure.

A member of the Assembly was sometimes employed to make those signals, which were understood by only one or two persons in the galleries, who by a similar mode communicated their import to others.

The usual signals were the handkerchief hanging half out of the pocket, sometimes out of the right, sometimes out of the left—the hat held in the hand in a particular manner, or with the national cockade uppermost—rubbing the eyes, or the nose, or the ear. All these had their particular meanings, with a variety of other signs
which

which may be easily conceived; each of which denoted the nature of the explosion required, whether for approbation or disapprobation.

To secure the majority it was necessary to have about a hundred and fifty persons in each of the two galleries. There were also one leader and five subalterns in each gallery. The leaders only were acquainted with the signal from the hall. This they immediately communicated by a different one to the ten subalterns, who directly began their marks of applause or censure, in which they were followed by all the mercenaries whom they had previously engaged; and their loud clappings generally excited those of all the people in the galleries.

The common mercenaries were acquainted with the subalterns only, and precisely followed their example, whether they clapped or hooted. It was left to the subalterns to engage their followers; but they were
often

often unacquainted with each other, and in confidential correspondence only with the leader, who informed them previous to every sitting of the signals they were to follow. The two leaders were not always known to each other, and both were entirely unacquainted with those who originally employed the person who gave signals from the hall.

The wages of the common followers were from forty sols to three livres each sitting. The subalterns were paid at the rate of ten livres, and the leaders at that of fifty.

When an important question was to be debated, the galleries were always in the pay of one party or the other; and sometimes each party had the usual number of their mercenaries on duty there; which never failed to occasion a great deal of noise, and a violent contest between the applauders and the hooters.

It sometimes happened also, that a number of the common hirelings deceived the

subalterns, and took money from those of both parties; in which case neither was well served, all was confusion and doubt, and the real sentiments of the *Peuple Souverain* seemed as ambiguous as the will of the Gods announced by the oracle of Delphos.

From this account a pretty just estimate may be made of the value of the applause or censure of that portion of the Sovereign People who were usually seated in the galleries of the National Assembly after it was removed to the capital, and which continued to be one of the most powerful engines of the Revolution until the time that Robespierre established the guillotine in lieu of all the rest.

At the period, however, of the insurrection which obliged the Assembly to leave Versailles, Robespierre was little known, and of too small importance in the party with whom he acted to have his opinion much regarded; but I have been told that,
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from the time that the States-General assumed the name of National Assembly, he often insisted on the advantages which would be derived from the Assembly's being removed to the capital. Whatever advantage the popular party derived from the support of the galleries at Versailles, it was easy to foresee it would be enjoyed in a much greater degree at Paris. Certain Deputies, therefore, formed the resolution to seize the first pretext that should present itself for removing the Assembly to that city. An incident of an extraordinary nature did present itself, which served them for the pretext they wished, and which others attempted to turn to more heinous purposes.

The incident alluded to was a feast given by the Gardes-du-Corps, which occasioned the march of the Parisian populace to Versailles. Those who wish to excuse or palliate that shameful expedition assert, that previous to the feast given by

the Body Guards, which they admit to have been its immediate cause, there had been a general and well-founded suspicion of a plan to carry the King and Royal Family to Metz, where they were to be joined by many of the Nobility and members of the Parliaments, who expected that numbers of the people would flock to the royal standard as soon as it was erected, and declare against the National Assembly ; that this scheme was to be aided and supported by certain Powers on the Continent, with a view to excite a civil war, occasion the dismemberment of France, and avenge the cause of Kings, who had been insulted by the restrictions which the subjects of Lewis XVI. had put on his power. The same persons insisted, that the King shewed the greatest reluctance to the wishes of the Nation : that he had delayed giving his sanction to the decrees of the 4th of August till the 16th of September ; and then, instead of

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an absolute assent, he had sent a commentary on the decrees, accompanied with a conditional assent only; the full sanction not having been obtained till the 20th of the same month, after several very urgent addresses from the Assembly: that he shewed the same aversion to the declaration of the Bill of Rights and first articles of the Constitution, and postponed his acceptance of them till the arrival of the multitude at Versailles on the 6th of October, and until the carriages which were prepared for his escape were stopped by the National Guards of Versailles. And, giving every circumstance the worst interpretation, they insisted, that when, on the failure of a loan proposed by M. Necker, the King sacrificed his jewels and plate to the public necessities, this was done merely with a view to blind the people to the preparations making for his escape, and because he was fully sensible that he could not have carried them

with

with him, and of course that they would have been all confiscated.

That the King would have been very well pleased to have been safely at Metz with his family, seems highly probable ; but as no proof has hitherto appeared of his having made arrangements to fly to that place at this time, all these assertions are mere conjectures.

The Count d'Estaing, who had the command of the National Guards of Versailles, having previously consulted the Municipality, and represented the necessity of protecting the National Assembly and the person of the King from any attempt against them, required of the Minister that a thousand troops of the line might be quartered in Versailles for that purpose.

This, like all the rest, was by some construed unfavourably, and imputed to a design of assisting, and not preventing, the escape of the King ; especially as the National Assembly had not been consulted with
 regard

regard to the propriety or necessity of the measure. However that may be, the regiment of Flanders, consisting of a thousand men, *were* ordered to Versailles. When they arrived, the officers were invited, with those of the National Guards, to an entertainment by the Gardes-du-Corps. The entertainment was given in the opera-house belonging to the palace. The guests amounted to the number of 240, and all the boxes were full of spectators. Towards the end of the entertainment the King and Queen had the curiosity to enter the hall, the Queen leading the young Dauphin, and attended by several ladies and gentlemen of the Court. This unexpected visit to a company, whose hearts were already elated with gaiety and warmed with wine, could not fail to rouse the spirit of loyalty. The healths of the Royal Family were drank with acclamations of joy. After walking through the hall, the royal party retired ;

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the music struck up a favourite loyal tune, which was accompanied by the voices of the guests. The gates of the hall were thrown open for the grenadiers of the two corps, who, having drank the healths of the Royal Family, hurried with jovial enthusiasm to pass the night in dancing beneath the windows of the palace. Some white cockades were distributed among them by the ladies of the court.

This scene passed on the first of October 1789. It was soon after circulated, and has been since published, that the entertainment was given and all the incidents arranged by certain persons of the Court, who were at the expence of the whole for the purpose of awakening the loyalty of the inhabitants of Versailles, attaching the regiment of Flanders and the National Guards to the King and Queen, prejudicing them against the National Assembly, favouring a plan already formed for the King's escape to Metz, and

effecting a counter-revolution ; and as these things were arranged at a time when the King pretended to co-operate with the Assembly in establishing a new Constitution, to which he expressed general good will, although he was scrupulous respecting particular articles, and wished to have them explained before he would give them his sanction, they are enumerated as proofs of the King's falsehood and hypocrisy. But all this is founded on mere conjecture and assertion, since no proof is brought that the entertainment was at the expence of the persons alluded to, or for the purposes above mentioned ; and if both were proved, it would still remain to be proved that the King was acquainted with, and had agreed to, the measures. It is very certain, indeed, that some persons of great influence who had emigrated were continually scheming plans of counter-revolution, and using every means in their power to prompt him

to withdraw from the kingdom ; being convinced that his presence with them would greatly facilitate the object they had constantly in view. They feared nothing so much as that the King should be gained over to the side of the People, and agree to a Constitution in which a great part, perhaps as much as he wished, of his own authority would be secured and confirmed, while they would remain deprived of their privileges and excluded from France for ever. But it is equally certain, that some of the most respectable members of the Assembly had taken great pains to inspire the King with a desire of becoming, and a pride in being thought, the Restorer of Liberty to France. They had represented the necessity of his abstaining from all communication with those who had emigrated from the kingdom ; as any appearance of that would tend to alienate the hearts of his subjects : and, above all, they had pointed out

the measure of withdrawing from France as pregnant with the most fatal consequences to himself and to his country. It is even said, that the example of James II. of England was mentioned as a warning to him by some, who asserted that the posterity of that Prince might have been placed on the throne, had he possessed the firmness to have remained at all risks in the island. Finally, the King was conjured to rely on the attachment and love of his own subjects, rather than on the humiliating protection and interested aid of foreign powers; for, even if they should accomplish the re-establishment of his family, there was much reason to fear it would be at the severe expence of his kingdom.

Upon the whole, there is reason to believe that the King had not formed any design at this time of withdrawing; that the feast was given at the sole expence of the Gardes-du-Corps, with no other view than

to entertain the guests who were invited ; and that the incidents which gave offence and created suspicion were accidental ; for, however imprudent some of the scenes may be thought, they were no way inconsistent with the character of the actors.

On the second of October, M. Mounier, as President, presented certain articles of the Constitution agreed on by the Assembly to the King for his acceptance. The King answered, that he would in due time make his intentions respecting those articles known. Some people imagined, that his Majesty was induced to give this answer by the marks of attachment to his person, and the expressions of loyalty that had passed at the entertainment of the preceding night ; and that he meant to postpone his acceptance till he should effect his escape. The Assembly were not pleased with the answer. Whatever were the King's motives, the news of his having delayed to sanction the articles

occasioned still more displeasure at Paris. His enemies represented this as a determined refusal ; and they resolved to spirit up the people to insurrection.

With this view, the circumstances of the entertainment at the Opera-house were misrepresented in the manner most likely to alarm the friends of liberty, and to enrage the populace. It was repeated, “ that the feast had been given for the purpose of seducing the National Guards from the cause of freedom ; that the general topic of conversation among the guests was the unhappy condition of the Royal Family, and how meritorious it would be to free them from it ; that songs breathing the same sentiment had been sung ; that the Queen, when she walked through the hall with the Dauphin in her arms, had recommended him to the soldiers in terms injurious to the people. It was said that the national cockade, the emblem of liberty, had been trodden

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den under foot ; that a great number of supernumerary officers and chevaliers of St. Louis were assembled at Versailles ; and that mercenary soldiers had been brought to that city of late, and more were expected, with a design to controul the Assembly, perhaps to massacre the members ; and that measures had been already used, and were still continued by the Court, to intercept the provisions destined for the capital.”

Those misrepresentations were not thought sufficient to excite the mob to the point in view. By means of considerable sums distributed among the agents of insurrection, of whom there were abundance at this time in Paris, a numerous band of men, armed with pikes and other weapons, assembled on the morning of the fifth of October in the square of the Hotel de Ville. It was not difficult for the agents above mentioned to collect a multitude of desperate persons ; because there really was a

great scarcity of provisions. Many poor families, particularly in the suburbs, were suffering the pangs of hunger, and all were terrified with the idea of impending famine. The Committee appointed for supplying the city with provisions were also accused of negligence; and the multitude insisted on entering into the Town-house to remonstrate with them. They were faintly opposed by the National Guards, who soon gave way, saying they would not fight against poor people who demanded only bread.

That this insurrection might have the less appearance of a premeditated plan, and be the less resisted at the beginning, it had been thought proper to employ women, and persons in female garb. To their noisy requisitions for bread the Committee declared that all possible means were using to procure it; but that they had met with unexpected difficulties. A cry was immediately
heard,

heard, that those difficulties originated at the Court, and that they would go to Versailles and demand redress from the King. This proposal met with universal approbation ; and soon after a man, known by the name of Maillard, offered himself as their leader. As this person had distinguished himself at the taking of the Bastile, and was known to them all, he was immediately chosen to that office *par acclamation* ; and the outcry was resumed of marching to Versailles. Maillard led his band of Amazons through the unresisting National Guards who filled the square, conducted them by beat of drum to the plain called the Elysian Fields, where they mustered near five thousand persons, of whom four-fifths were women, or dressed like women. Many of those who were in men's dress were disguised with long beards, or in some other fantastical manner. Having previously broken into some magazines, they were all
armed ;

armed ; and they stopped as many coaches as were necessary to furnish horses for dragging some pieces of cannon, a poissarde being mounted on each horse and a couple on each cannon, which followed the main body in their march to Versailles. This Maillard, who offered himself so à-propos, and was chosen so unanimously as their leader, was most probably one of the agents previously fixed upon for conducting this business, under the secret influence and at the expence of the Duke of Orleans.

M. La Fayette has been censured for not having dispersed this band of insurgents, and prevented their marching to Versailles. It appears, however, that the spirit of insurrection had gained upon the National Guards themselves ; that they were deaf to the remonstrances of their commander, and refused to use any kind of force against women. And in a short time the clamour became universal, that the General himself should
lead

lead them to Versailles, lay their grievances before the King, and invite him to reside at Paris.

M. La Fayette said every thing he could think of to turn them from this ; and the whole of his conduct both at this time and previous to it proves his sincerity.

When a fermentation was excited some time before this period by a very turbulent and seditious man of the name of St. Huruge, who proposed this very measure, that the King and the National Assembly should be appointed to reside at Paris, it was greatly owing to the spirited behaviour of M. La Fayette, that the mob which this man had assembled was dispersed, and St. Huruge himself, with several other agitators, was seized and sent to prison ; and there can be no doubt that the present insurrection would have had a similar termination, if the National Guards had been equally obedient to M. La Fayette

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on this occasion as on the former. Besides, the ill terms on which M. La Fayette was with the Duke of Orleans is sufficient of itself to clear him of this accusation. No two men were less likely to be in intimacy with each other. Their characters were directly opposite: M. La Fayette is described by those who have known him long and intimately, as indefatigable in the pursuit of renown, disinterested, brave, and generous—qualities never attributed to the character of the Duke of Orleans.

Some are so irritated by the losses they have sustained, others by the consequences which they dread from the French Revolution, that they view with equal enmity those men who from the most laudable motives joined in the measures for obtaining a free Constitution for France, and those who rendered these measures abortive, by involving the country in anarchy and drenching it in
blood,

blood. With equal discernment might Hampden be confounded with Cromwell, or Ruffel or Sydney with Titus Oates.

To charge the Dukes of Rochefoucault and Liancourt, Mess. de Lally-Tolendal, Mounier, Clermont-Tonnerre, Malouet, and many others, whose views were to reform the abuses of an arbitrary government, and establish a limited monarchy, as in any respect accessaries to the bloody scenes which have been acted in the course of this Revolution, is in the highest degree absurd. If such reasoning were admitted, Luther would be proved to be the author of the massacre of St. Bartholomew; because, unless he had attempted to detect the abuses of Popery, and brought about the Reformation, there would have been no Protestants to massacre.

The National Guards assembled before the Town-house were so determined on this expedition to Versailles, and so irritated at La Fayette's persevering endeavours to dissuade

dissuade them, that a large body of them declared that they would no longer have him for their commander, and actually proposed to M. Dogni, Intendant des Postes and Commander of the Battalion of St. Eustache, to accept the chief command instead of La Fayette, and to lead them to Versailles, declaring that they would follow his orders in all respects. He, however, positively refused. Seeing that at all events they were decided on going, M. La Fayette at length said, that if the Municipality would give him an order for that purpose, he would go at the head of the National Guards to communicate to the King the distresses of the capital, and the grievances of which they complained.

Having obtained the order, he set out with a body of 20,000 men for Versailles, four or five hours after the motley band above described had taken the same route.

Whoever were the first movers of this
insur-

insurrection, they had given different reasons for the necessity of it, adapted to the different prejudices and dispositions of the persons they wished to excite.

The National Militia complained of the indignity offered to the three-coloured cockade by the Gardes-du-Corps at the famous banquet, for which, they said, these Body Guards deserved death.

The old French Guards, who were incorporated with the National Guards, were provoked at not having been allowed to guard the person of the King. They said that this was a clear proof that he intended to escape out of the kingdom; and they were instructed to call for his being removed to Paris.

Some exclaimed against his having delayed to sanction the decrees of the National Assembly, and said they ought to march to Versailles, on purpose to let him know that the People were impatient for that measure.

The Poissardes cried out against the scarcity of bread ; and as they proceeded to Versailles, they often execrated the Queen as the sole cause of the scarcity. “ I never heard,” said a Garde-à-Cheval as he passed them, “ that the Queen devoured more bread than another woman.” “ C’est égal,” answered one of these furies : “ Tu vas à Versailles ; dis à la Reine que nous y ferons pour lui couper le cou.”

The King had gone that morning to hunt the stag. He was informed, while in the midst of the chase, that there had been great disorders in Paris, in consequence of which a multitude of armed people, many of them in women’s dress, were marching to Versailles. His Majesty immediately left the field, and returned to the Palace. The Captain of his guards asked if he had any orders to give to him. The King answered, laughing, *Eh quoi, pour des femmes ! vous vous moquez.*

Such accounts came afterwards, however,

of their numbers, of their rage, and of the threatening language which they held on their march, that this expedition began to be considered as a very serious business by those near the person of the King. It was even proposed in the Council, that the Royal Family should be removed; but that proposition being over-ruled, the Queen was informed, that as the fury and malice of the insurgents were peculiarly pointed against her, it would be highly proper for her to withdraw, for some time at least, from Versailles: to which, with a firmness which never forsook her on the most trying occasions, she answered, “ I am determined never to forsake my husband: if the Parisians are bent on murdering me, I will die at the feet of the King.”

ERRATA TO VOL. I.

Page 8. at bottom, for *vincet* read *vincit*.

11. at top, for *wonderment* read *foolish wonder*.

228. line 3d from bottom, del. *as*.

——— 2d from bottom, for *they* read *and*.

231. line 4th from top, del. *all*.

